

# Inspection of Shepherd Primary School

Shepherd's Lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 8JJ

---

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils like being part of a school where everyone knows each other. They make some good friendships in their time here. They enjoy practical work in science, looking at artefacts in history, playing percussion instruments in music and using the hall equipment in physical education lessons. Children in the early years relish the extensive outdoor learning area. Pupils talk positively about having trips and visitors into school to bring learning to life.

Pupils enjoy the range of subjects they study. They are clear as to what teachers expect from them in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and want to do their best. They are keen to earn house points.

Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs. These include football for boys and girls, cookery, and arts and crafts. Pupils are starting to take on more leadership roles, such as caring for the environment.

Pupils usually cooperate well. They know the school rules. They have trusted adults to talk to if they have concerns about bullying. Pupils do believe that most adults sort out problems and that pupils feel safe. However, some pupils report that not all adults follow up behaviour incidents in the same way.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have an ambitious curriculum in place. Teachers know the breadth of knowledge they need to teach pupils. Leaders have ensured that this knowledge builds year on year from as soon as pupils start school.

Children in the early years make a positive start to school. They quickly learn to read. They know the letter sounds relevant for their age. Teachers ensure that children develop a good understanding of number and shape. Skilful adults check that children have time to rehearse new learning. They provide engaging activities to excite and fascinate the children about the world around them. Adults also know how to prepare children for their future learning. As a result, children are ready for the move up to Year 1.

As pupils progress through school, leaders check that teachers deliver the agreed curriculum knowledge. Teachers adapt activities to meet the needs of their class, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adults provide additional support in class for pupils with SEND. Teachers address any misconceptions pupils may have. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Leaders are in the process of refining some foundation subjects. This is to ensure pupils are taught and retain the most important subject knowledge. Some pupils therefore still have gaps in key knowledge in these subjects.

Leaders prioritise daily reading activities. Staff follow a clearly structured approach to teach reading. Once pupils know letter sounds, they quickly and successfully move on to reading books matched to their reading stage. Pupils have regular opportunities to read and practise the sounds they have learned. Teachers check if pupils need help with reading and provide support. As a result, most pupils become fluent and independent readers as they move up through the school. However, a few older pupils who find reading tricky still have gaps in their reading knowledge. They are not catching up as quickly as they need to.

Pupils are familiar with lesson routines. No learning time is wasted. Pupils can focus on their learning in class, and any chatter is usually dealt with effectively. Overall, pupils behave well in lessons. However, there are instances of pupils falling out with each other or not following school rules, especially at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Not all adults apply the behaviour policy consistently, so some of these unwelcome behaviours re-occur. This is also a view shared by some parents.

Through lessons, assemblies and visits, pupils understand the British values of democracy, rule of law and respect. They appreciate differences and know that discrimination is wrong. They have an emerging understanding of the appropriate language to use when describing differences. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and about healthy relationships. Pupils like sharing their views and opinions on life in Britain. They build their sense of community through taking on leadership roles in the school.

Staff enjoy working here. They appreciate how leaders consider staff workload and well-being. Staff value the professional development they receive.

Governors are aware of their strategic role and statutory duties. They have benefited from a review of their roles and responsibilities to ensure they hold leaders to account effectively. Many parents are very positive about the school. Governors acknowledge that some parents need reassurance that if they raise a concern, leaders are also made aware so they can act upon it.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils have adults who they can talk to if worried. Staff understand the procedures to report safeguarding concerns about pupils or other adults. Once leaders know of concerns, they act swiftly and with tenacity. Leaders provide up-to-date training for staff on safeguarding matters. They are in the process of strengthening even further the processes for staff reporting concerns to them.

Leaders have all the required checks in place for adults working in the school. They provide additional vetting checks beyond what is statutorily required as an extra layer of vigilance.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders are refining their curriculum programmes to include more information about the specific knowledge that pupils need to know. Currently, pupils are not yet fully secure in their detailed understanding of the most important knowledge that leaders want them to learn. Leaders need to explicitly signpost for teachers the most important knowledge they want pupils to remember and in what depth in these few subjects. Leaders must check that pupils can then successfully recall the detailed knowledge they have learned.
- A few older pupils who have not had the full benefit of the new phonics scheme still have gaps in their reading ability. This means they are not catching up quickly enough with their reading. Leaders should ensure that adults have specific training on how to support these pupils so that they quickly become fluent and confident readers for their age.
- On some occasions, adults are not applying the behaviour policy consistently. This results in some pupils and parents feeling that behaviour concerns are not always being addressed. Leaders must ensure that staff have the required training to know how to respond to concerns confidently and consistently according to school procedures. Leaders, including governors, then need to check that this happens.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 117096   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hertfordshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10287093   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 224  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Local authority  |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Sarah McAllister   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Claire Foad  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.shepherd.herts.sch.uk">www.shepherd.herts.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                  |

## Information about this school

- The school currently uses a specialist behaviour resource commissioned by the local authority. This is an unregistered alternative provider yet is overseen by a local primary school.
- The Nursery offers provision every day, mornings only.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For the deep dives, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks

and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also looked at a range of pupils' work from across the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's own self-evaluation.
- The inspectors looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the systems and processes to support safeguarding and the safeguarding ethos in the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 79 free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate and reviewed written correspondence sent to them from parents. Inspectors considered the 30 responses to the staff survey. They also spoke to a range of staff during the inspection. There were 37 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. In addition, inspectors spoke to pupils from different year groups during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Lawrence

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023