

Inspection of The Shade Primary School

The Shade, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5DE

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 October 2024

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The headteacher of this school is Jane Segust. This school is part of the Staploe Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Carin Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Wright.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Shade is a happy and safe school. Pupils know and embody the school's values. They are respectful to peers and adults. Pupils trust and value staff. This helps them to be reflective and ready to learn.

Pupils benefit from effective support for their well-being. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils settle and behave well. They concentrate and try hard in lessons. At breaktimes, pupils have fun but stay calm. Children in the early years quickly learn to sit still and focus when needed. Pupils conduct themselves well. They tidy away chairs and smilingly hold doors open for visitors.

There are high expectations for learning. As a result, pupils do well. They enjoy and take pride in their work. For example, on the playground, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their knowledge of science.

Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to develop positive character traits. They regularly take part in local community and charity work. Pupils volunteer for the many meaningful leadership roles available to them. They are proud to make a difference through these roles. Pupils who act as eco ambassadors recycle school materials, while play leaders support younger pupils with breaktime activities. Junior travel ambassadors lead assemblies on road safety. These experiences build pupils' resilience and responsibility.

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

There is an ambitious and well-designed curriculum. It breaks down learning into well-ordered steps. Subject leaders build new content carefully on pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, pupils confidently develop what they know. For example, children in Reception are taught to write well-formed letters. Year 3 pupils use suitable adverbials in creative writing. By Year 6, pupils analyse the grammatical parts of complex sentences with assurance. While this is the case, the school's provisional results in key stage 2 national tests fell in 2024. This was especially so in writing. In response, the school has revised its writing curriculum. It has implemented a more robust programme. Pupils are now learning what they need to be successful.

The curriculum is well delivered in most cases. The school uses consistent teaching approaches. This helps pupils remember previous content, such as scientific vocabulary. Teachers use questioning skilfully to help pupils make connections between different things they learn. In the early years, including in the two-year-old provision, adults carefully help children learn through play. Teachers check learning thoroughly and rectify any misconceptions. This means pupils build secure foundations. They can apply their knowledge well, such as in mathematical reasoning and calculation. That said, sometimes the choice of learning activities is less successful. Where this happens, pupils understand the intended knowledge less quickly and confidently. Some pupils struggle to stay engaged. This hinders their progress.

There is a strong culture of reading. Starting in the early years, children develop a love for books. Staff teach phonics engagingly and effectively. Pupils who need help to keep up receive prompt and successful support. They speedily become fluent readers. Pupils with SEND are enthusiastic about reading. The school helps older pupils discover texts they enjoy and find interesting.

Pupils with SEND do well. The school listens to families. It identifies needs accurately. The school is resourceful and proactive in adapting the delivery of the curriculum to pupils' needs. Some pupils with SEND receive high-quality learning outside of the classroom. Mostly, this provides these pupils with excellent support. This enables them to fill gaps in their learning and build their skills, such as in literacy and mathematics. Occasionally, however, this learning is not as well integrated with the main curriculum as it could be. This bespoke provision is new. The school is not as clear as it could be on the long-term plan for these pupils. This means the support is not as effective as it might be at helping pupils with SEND learn and develop.

The school deals with the underlying causes of inappropriate behaviour and absence. For instance, it ensures that any consequences make sense to pupils. Incidents of misbehaviour have fallen. Attendance is at appropriate levels. If pupils struggle to attend, the school does all it can to help. For example, it liaises promptly with agencies where needed. This leads to many of these pupils attending more regularly.

The personal development programme is coherent. Pupils learn about important issues, for example different types of families. Pupils remember and articulate much of this learning well. An example is regarding democracy. Pupils are taught about this in the classroom, then vote on issues in school. Sometimes, however, pupils learn content but have insufficient opportunities for rich discussions about it. In these cases, their understanding lacks depth.

Leaders and trustees know the strengths and weaknesses of provision. The trust supports the school well. Trustees challenge where needed. The trust has helped the school improve the curriculum, such as help with staff training. Staff work well as a team to improve provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers use tasks that do not support pupils to learn the intended knowledge effectively. This means that some pupils lose engagement and build up what they know less securely. The school should make sure that teachers have the guidance and support they need to deliver the curriculum with consistent effectiveness.

- When some pupils with SEND are given bespoke teaching outside of the classroom, the school does not always ensure that their learning is integrated successfully with the main curriculum. This means the support is not as effective as it might be at helping a few pupils with SEND learn and develop in the longer term. The school must ensure it has clear plans to integrate these pupils with the main curriculum quickly and fully wherever possible.
- The school sometimes does not provide pupils with opportunities for rich discussion of their learning in aspects of the personal development programme. This means that pupils do not always develop the depth of understanding they could of important issues. The school should ensure that it uses opportunities to help pupils discuss and debate learning from personal development, so they have confidence in articulating what they know.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139555
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345367
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Wright
CEO of the trust	Carin Taylor
Headteacher	Jane Segust
Website	www.theshadeprimary.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	29 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Staploe Education Trust.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is high and has risen significantly since the pandemic.
- The school has nursery provision for two- and three-year-olds.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school day is slightly below the DfE's recommended length of 32.5 hours. The school plans to review this.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the CEO of the trust, the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with two trustees, one of who is also the chair of the school's advisory board (AB), and another member of the AB.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics, science, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. In early reading, this took the form of pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects, particularly design and technology, art and music.
- As part of evaluating the programme for personal development, inspectors considered the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke with many pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Merritt

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Ofsted Inspector

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