

INSPECTION REPORT

SHANKLEA FIRST SCHOOL

Nairn Road, Parkside Chase, Cramlington,
Northumberland. NE23 1RQ

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122194

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Holland

Reporting inspector: Mrs. M. Warburton
22522

Dates of inspection: 29th to 30th October 2002

Inspection number: 248328

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Nairn Road Parkside Chase Cramlington Northumberland
Postcode:	NE23 1RQ
Telephone number:	01670 715205
Fax number:	01670 590610
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. P. McClurry
Date of previous inspection:	13 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
22522	Mrs. M. Warburton	Registered inspector
12503	Mr. M. Cundick	Lay inspector
28772	Mrs. B. Hudson	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Durham Local Education Authority

Education Department
County Hall
Durham

DH1 5UJ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	6
How good the school is	6
What the school does well	6
What could be improved	6
How the school has improved since its last inspection	6
Standards	7
Pupils' attitudes and values	7
Teaching and learning	8
Other aspects of the school	8
How well the school is led and managed	9
Parents' and carers' views of the school	9
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	12
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14 - 18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shanklea First School is an average sized school situated in the new town of Cramlington in the south of Northumberland. Most pupils are from families where at least one parent is employed.

The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average, although it has increased from around 4% to 8% in recent years. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is well below average, although this has also increased recently. The percentage of pupils with a statement of SEN is in line with the national average.

The school has a playgroup for pre-school children, and most pupils in the reception class have attended this or a nursery. Attainment on entry to the school is above average overall, although the full range is represented.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shanklea First School is a good school where pupils regularly achieve standards that are well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above expectation for age when they leave the school at the age of nine. The leadership and management of the school are good, and all available resources are used well so that the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Regularly achieves standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 that are well above the national average.
- Achieves high standards in speaking and listening throughout the school.
- Provides a well balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.
- There are positive relationships throughout the school at all levels.
- Attendance is well above the national average.
- Good progress has been made in raising standards in mathematics.

What could be improved

- The provision of more stimulating and challenging tasks in lessons so that pupils have more opportunities to find things out for themselves.
- Making more use of pupils' contributions in lessons to extend their learning.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1997 the school has made good improvements in the standards achieved and in addressing the key issues in the previous report. Standards achieved in English at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved from above to well above average, and in mathematics from average to well above, although this is not fully reflected in the 2002 tests. Attainment at the end of Year 4 is now above expectation for age, which is better than before.

Most of the key issues in the previous report have been fully addressed. Schemes of work are now secure and curriculum planning is satisfactory. Assessment systems are in place and pupils now achieve standards in design and technology (DT), history and geography that are in line with expectation for age. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed so that they now have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subjects they lead. The school aims have been reviewed and there is now a vision for the school that is shared by all staff and governors.

A system for managing pupils' behaviour has been developed and is very effective in ensuring that the majority of pupils behave well. However, behaviour remains an issue for a small minority of older boys. There is still sometimes insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils in lessons.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	B	A
writing	A*	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Over the past four years the school has regularly achieved standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 that are well above average in reading and writing, and usually so in mathematics. Standards achieved in 2002 were above average in reading, well above in writing and in line with the average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools they were well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was above average in reading and writing but below in mathematics. Standards in science, as judged by teacher assessment, were very high, in the top 5% nationally with all pupils achieving the expected Level 2. This represents a good improvement since the 2001 tests. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was average.

Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards throughout the school are above expectation for age and that pupils of average and lower prior attainment are given good support to achieve the expected levels. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are higher than would be expected throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 pupils' reading is a strength.

Throughout the school pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but the progress made by higher-attaining pupils could be better if they were provided with more challenging work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning. Most concentrate well and try hard to complete their tasks. They enjoy lessons and respond confidently and with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Most pupils are polite and behave well, but a small minority behave inappropriately in some lessons, and are over-exuberant in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Throughout the school pupils relate well to each other and to adults. Pupils readily help with tasks and routines around the classrooms and the school. They work well together in pairs and groups.
Attendance	Good. Well above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to

	school.
--	---------

Pupils attitudes and values are good overall. The school has been very successful in improving the behaviour and attitudes of the majority of pupil's since the last inspection. Relationships throughout the school are a strength.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers organise their lessons well and use appropriate resources to good effect. They give good support to pupils, including those who have SEN. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are made clear to the pupils at the beginning and reinforced at the end. Care is taken to ensure that lessons build on pupils' prior learning so that steady, systematic progress is made, particularly in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. In some lessons there is insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils because tasks are too structured and too much information is provided. This means that there are few opportunities for them to find things out for themselves by research, experiment and investigation, and little use is made of pupils' ideas and suggestions. As a result the progress higher-attaining pupils make is not always as good as it could be.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides an interesting, well-balanced curriculum for all pupils, with an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, and a good range of visits, visitors and projects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are provided with suitable tasks and support, and their progress is carefully monitored by teachers, who ensure that targets are set.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Social and moral development are encouraged through an effective policy for behaviour management which is consistently applied. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are provided in lessons and assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to respect the values and beliefs of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff know pupils well, and good use is made of the system that tracks pupils' personal and academic development.

The curriculum provided by the school is a strength. It is broad, balanced and relevant, with an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills and enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors and special projects. The good care of pupils is evident in the good relationships that exist, and the knowledge that teachers have about individual needs and achievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the Headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school runs smoothly and all staff work in partnership towards agreed priorities. There is a clear sense of shared vision and commitment to further improvement.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	Good. The governors fulfil all statutory duties and are very supportive of the school. They work in close partnership with the head teacher and staff, ensuring that they have good knowledge of the school and a shared commitment to improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes good use of available data to evaluate performance. All aspects of school life are reviewed annually and the head teacher and governors regularly monitor progress towards targets in the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the resources available well, supporting identified priorities through financial planning.

The good leadership and management of the school are under-pinned by effective, supportive relationships that are evident between the head teacher, governors and all staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • The teaching. • Their children like school. • The way the school is led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views expressed by parents, although there are aspects of the teaching that could be improved.

The team judges the amount of homework appropriate for pupils of this age, and that the school endeavours to ensure that additional activities provided are accessible to all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Regularly achieves standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 that are well above the national average.

1. The school works hard to achieve high standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1. At the time of the last inspection standards achieved in reading were well above the national average. This has continued to be the case until the 2002 results which show a slight decline to above average. This can be explained by the increasing percentage of pupils with SEN in this cohort. Standards in writing were average at the time of the last inspection. They have now been well above the national average for the past four years, and the school did particularly well to achieve this in 2002 given the nature of the cohort. In both reading and writing the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was above the national average in 2002. The recent improvements in mathematics were not reflected in the 2002 results, but in the two years before this they were well above the national average. In science standards were judged to be average at the time of the last inspection. The 2002 teacher assessments show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 is now very high, in the top 5% nationally.
2. One of the reasons that the school regularly achieves good standards in the national tests is the emphasis given to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and the good use made of the national strategies. The approach to teaching literacy and numeracy ensures that skills are taught in a systematic way, ensuring that pupils make steady progress in their learning. Additionally the good support given to pupils of middle to lower prior attainment enables most to achieve the level expected for age.

Achieves high standards in speaking and listening throughout the school

3. Throughout the school pupils achieve standards in speaking and listening that are above, and often well above expectation for age. Pupils enter the school with standards in language and communication that are higher than would be expected. The focus on developing these skills helps pupils make good progress. They are given many opportunities in lessons to discuss things with teachers and with each other. The use of "talk partners" is established in some classes and this is effective in encouraging pupils to discuss specific things such as clues about the character in a story, and to report back concisely to the class. Pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking, such as in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when they were asked to explain how they had approached an investigation and in a Year 4 science lesson when they discussed resistance. In the reception class some pupils can talk at length using sentences of more than one phrase, and vocabulary such as "concentrate" when discussing their approaches to work. Older pupils can talk confidently about books they have read and how they access the library.
4. Listening skills are developed well through ensuring that pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers share the objective – "today I'm looking for good listeners" – clearly, and check listening by asking appropriate questions. Pupils show that they have listened well by the responses they give. In assemblies and lessons most pupils are very attentive and are able to recall stories and facts they have been told.

Provides a well balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils

5. The curriculum provided is broad, balanced and relevant for the pupils in the school. Good use has been made of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to teach basic skills in these subjects and the school has made a sensible decision to provide additional opportunities for reading, which is a current focus, outside the literacy hour. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the development of reading skills. The school has organised the day so that a half-hour session after assembly can be used effectively to teach areas such as ICT skills, personal and social education, spelling and handwriting and this ensures that the time available in the school day is used well. This session is also sometimes used to provide additional activities for pupils such as gymnastics or football coaching, and this approach ensures that such activities are available to all.
6. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places such as Roman sites, visitors such as grandparents who talk about the past, and by special projects to develop skills in particular subjects, such as the use of "Katie Morag" stories to develop geographical skills and understanding.

There are positive relationships throughout the school at all levels

7. The good relationships that exist throughout the school are a strength.
8. There are very supportive relationships between the governing body and the school. Governors are kept well informed about what is happening through good communication and detailed reports from the head teacher. Many are regular visitors to the school and are able to observe and monitor both formally and informally. There is an atmosphere of trust and openness which enables governors to have a good understanding of strengths, areas for development and progress made.
9. Relationships between staff are good. Subject leaders are always willing to assist and share their expertise. Staff are approachable and helpful, and support one another. Parents appreciate the good relationships they have with the staff and feel comfortable about approaching the school with any questions or problems that arise.
10. In classes relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good. Staff are supportive of individual pupils and respond well to their needs. There is a good partnership between teachers and other staff who work together effectively to deliver the curriculum and care for pupils. In lessons pupils work well together in pairs and groups, co-operating and showing respect for the ideas, feelings and beliefs of others.

Attendance is well above the national average

11. At 95.3% in the year 2000/01, attendance was well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence was below the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most parents report that their children like school.

Good progress has been made in raising standards in mathematics

12. Standards in mathematics have improved considerably over the past four years. In 1998 they were below the national average; in 2001 they were well above, and above those achieved by similar schools. This improvement is not reflected in the 2002 results because of the nature of the cohort. The trend of improvement has been more rapid than the national trend.
13. Improving standards in mathematics has been a focus for the school. Since the introduction of the national numeracy strategy staff have accessed appropriate training and are now much more confident in teaching mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved and teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Results of statutory and other tests have been analysed to identify areas of weakness and these have been addressed through training and development. Work has been done to improve the confidence of girls, who were previously not tackling questions if they were uncertain, and the attitudes of boys which has been a broader area for development. The scheme of work for mathematics has been improved so that it now gives more support to teachers, and better resources have been acquired. The school has worked with other schools to develop best practice and this has had a positive impact on provision and standards.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision of more stimulating and challenging tasks in lessons so that pupils have more opportunities to find things out for themselves

14. Teachers plan lessons according to the schemes of work in the school, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and national guidance for other subjects. This approach ensures that skills and knowledge are taught systematically and that statutory requirements are met. However, in some lessons the tasks provided lack challenge for some pupils. The use of prepared worksheets means that too often pupils only do the work asked of them and do not work at a level higher than that required of the worksheet, even when they are able. Sometimes teachers go through the worksheet and tell pupils what to write, so that they are not required to think or work out answers for themselves.
15. In a good Year 3 numeracy lesson on investigating number patterns, too much information was given at an early stage so that more able pupils did not have to investigate and find out the pattern for themselves. Similarly in a Year 4 science lesson which was otherwise good, pupils were given instructions on how to record the results of an experiment when the most able could have worked out their own way. In a Year 2 lesson, more able pupils found the task of counting in two's "too easy" and were not stimulated or motivated until harder, extension tasks were provided.
16. The provision of more open-ended tasks would provide more challenge and stimulation for all pupils, particularly those of higher attainment

Making more use of pupils' contributions in lessons to extend their learning

17. In most lessons pupils are articulate, enthusiastic and keen to contribute and to demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers provide good opportunities for them to discuss things, and often are skilled at questioning. However, too often pupils' contributions are not built upon to extend learning at a higher level. Opportunities are missed to reinforce learning through using these contributions, or to praise pupils for what they bring to the lesson. This was the case in a Year 1 literacy lesson that focused on the use of speech bubbles, when one pupil's knowledge of speech marks was not used to demonstrate different ways of recording speech. Similarly in a Year 2 geography lesson, an opportunity to further learning about mountainous regions was missed when a pupil provided a symbol for mountains which had snow on the top. By making better use of pupils' prior knowledge and their contributions, more progress could be made in a range of subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

18. Improve the progress that pupils make throughout the school by:
 - Ensuring that all pupils, particularly those of higher prior attainment, are challenged and motivated by tasks and questions in lessons. (Paragraphs 14, 15 and 16)
 - Making better use of the knowledge and contributions that pupils bring to lessons. (Paragraph 17)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	9	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	14	41	45	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	226
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	17	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	24	25
	Girls	15	16	17
	Total	36	40	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (90)	95 (93)	100 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	24	25
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	37	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (93)	98 (97)	100 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	223	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1: 1
Average class size	28.25

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001- 2002
----------------	------------

	£
Total income	524,039.00
Total expenditure	505,072.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,988.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,564.00
Balance carried forward to next year	45,534.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

226

Number of questionnaires returned

85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55.3	41.2	3.5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48.2	44.7	5.9	0	1.2
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	50.6	7.1	0	2.4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28.2	51.8	18.8	1.2	0
The teaching is good.	52.9	47.1	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41.2	47.1	10.6	0	1.2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49.4	44.7	4.7	0	1.2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52.9	45.9	0	0	1.2
The school works closely with parents.	35.3	51.8	11.8	0	1.2
The school is well led and managed.	45.9	50.6	1.2	0	2.4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	52.9	2.4	0	4.7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16.7	36.9	20.2	7.1	19