



Shipbourne School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118311
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280290
Inspection dates 10 July 2006 to 10 July 2006
Reporting inspector Selwyn Ward AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stumble Hill
School category	Community		Shipbourne
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9PB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01732 810344
Number on roll	57	Fax number	01732 811355
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian King
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Farthing

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 10 July 2006 - 10 July 2006	Inspection number 280290
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report 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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller-than-average primary school with just two classes, although pupils in the older class are split into two groups for some of their lessons. The school has been under threat of closure, but these proposals have now been dropped following a successful campaign led by the school governors. The recent period of uncertainty over the future of the school has, however, resulted in a drop in pupil numbers. Almost all of the pupils are White British. Most come from advantaged homes and they are generally of above-average ability when they start school. An average number have learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. An eloquent Year 6 pupil described how the school 'has kept me very happy for six enjoyable years of friendly staff, a family environment and outstanding achievements – for me and the school.'

Children get off to a good start in the Reception year. Although they are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, the good provision enables them to attain and frequently exceed all of the early learning goals expected for pupils of this age. Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 to 6, building steadily on what they have learnt before to attain consistently high standards by the end of Year 6. Good leadership and management have helped to build an effective staff team, so that pupils benefit from good teaching and support. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They get on very well with one another and are keen to learn because they enjoy school. The school has installed and teachers make generally good use of interactive whiteboards as a teaching tool, but these are not yet in all teaching areas and so opportunities are missed to make some lessons even more stimulating for the pupils. Pupils know and use the individual targets set for them that show them what they need to focus on to do better. In some cases, these are supplemented by good marking that gives pupils equally clear guidance on how to improve their work, but this is not a consistent feature of marking throughout the school.

The school has maintained and built on the many strengths identified in its last inspection. More recently, the leadership of the school has accurately identified that pupils have not generally achieved as well in writing as in other subjects. The measures put in place to remedy this shortcoming have been effective. This, and the accuracy of its self-evaluation, closely matching that of inspectors, shows that the school is very well placed to build further on its success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking more consistently gives pupils guidance on how to improve their work.
- Extend teachers' use of ICT to make lessons more stimulating.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Throughout their time at the school, pupils are helped to steadily build on their above-average starting point. As a result, they achieve well and attain consistently high standards, meeting and often exceeding the challenging targets set for them. All children in the Reception year attain and a high number exceed all of the early learning goals expected for children of this age. In assessments at the end of Year 2, all pupils reach and a high proportion exceed the nationally expected level. Year 6 test results have presented an essentially similar picture in each of the years since the last inspection, although results for more-able

pupils in English in 2005 were not quite as good as those in mathematics and science. The school correctly identified that the reason for this was that pupils were not given enough opportunities to develop their skills in writing. Measures taken over the past year to remedy this have been successful, and standards in English have risen further in 2006. Pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with learning difficulties, make good progress throughout their time in school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although further multi-cultural activities would broaden pupils' awareness of the diversity of British culture. Attendance rates are very good. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and say that they enjoy lessons and everything about school – 'there is nothing we don't like.' Pupils are confident, friendly and polite. Their behaviour in lessons and at break-times is exemplary. Pupils explain that bullying is not tolerated and, in the rare instances of it happening, is dealt with swiftly and fairly.

Pupils understand and describe the wide range of strategies the school has to ensure that they are safe and secure at all times. Indeed, older pupils are expected to write their own risk assessments for lessons such as science before undertaking activities. Pupils are actively encouraged and have a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities, such as being trained 'buddies,' and lead fund-raising initiatives for various charities. Year 6 pupils form the school council, and their ideas are valued and fully taken into account. This helps them to make a positive contribution to their community and prepares them well for their future well-being. However, younger pupils do not currently have opportunities to take on similar responsibilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Lessons are well planned. Teachers outline clearly what it is that the pupils are expected to learn and ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' different abilities. This means that pupils are set tasks that are demanding, and they enjoy rising to the challenge. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, for example, by choosing for themselves how to record their findings in science investigations. The very good support given to pupils with learning difficulties helps them to make good and sometimes remarkable progress. Teachers and pupils are increasingly making use of ICT in lessons, and the school recognises that extending the availability and use of interactive whiteboards as a teaching tool can help to make lessons even more stimulating. Marking is satisfactory. There are examples of good marking that gives

pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, but there are too many occasions on which the work is merely ticked to indicate that it has been done.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curricular provision is good. The school provides a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum for all age groups, ensuring that pupils build on what they learn as they progress through the school. Very thorough planning for mixed-age classes ensures that tasks are well matched to all pupils' learning needs. The range of extra-curricular activities offered is remarkably wide for a school of this size, and a very high number of the pupils take part. The school has good links with other schools and organisations. New laptops have also been provided and there is now one computer for every two pupils in the school, which is a very favourable ratio and is enabling pupils to develop and use their ICT skills in many lessons. Where they have been installed, the new interactive whiteboards are generally being used well. 'It's cool using the interactive whiteboard. It motivates us,' said a Year 6 pupil. Many lessons are taught, however, in areas of the school where teachers have no access to this technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's provision of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. There is strong promotion of pupils' welfare and personal development and there are very good systems to ensure their safety. Child protection systems are fully in place and all staff have had appropriate training. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and this helps them to make such good progress. The individual targets that all pupils are given in English and mathematics help them to focus on what they need to do to do better, but marking does not always give pupils similarly helpful guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Given that a substantial amount of her time is spent teaching, the headteacher's leadership is remarkably effective. She leads the whole-staff team with dedication and energy to drive forward school improvements, such as the recent successful initiatives to improve standards in writing. Subject leadership is shared collectively by all teaching staff, most of whom work part-time. This collaborative arrangement works effectively.

School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Strategic planning gives a clear lead for continuing improvement in standards and the quality of provision. The school improvement plan is compiled with the active input of all staff and governors, incorporating parents' views and suggestions. It is reviewed termly. Leadership and management are outward looking, in that teachers are encouraged to visit and learn from good practice in other schools. Governors are very supportive of the school. They

spearheaded the recent campaign to save the school from closure. Governors are knowledgeable and are actively involved in the school's monitoring programme, reviewing all aspects of the school's provision, including teaching and learning, the curriculum and best use of resources.

The achievement of the school's leadership and management in maintaining the many strengths identified in the last inspection and in securing further improvements demonstrates its strong capacity to build further on its success.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 July 2006

Dear Pupils,

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school

- You enjoy and are rightly proud of your school.
- It is well run.
- You all do well because your teachers set you challenging work.
- Your individual targets help you to do even better.
- Your behaviour is exceptionally good and you get on very well with each other.

These are the things that we think could be better

- Teachers could make lessons even more interesting for you if they were able to make more use of ICT and interactive whiteboards.
- Marking does not always tell you what you need to do to do better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully,

Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector