



Shorne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary

School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 118594
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 280349
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Skinner

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cob Drive
School category	Voluntary controlled		Shorne
Age range of pupils	5–11		Gravesend DA12 3DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01474 822312
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	01474 822312
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Audrey Tompkins
		Headteacher	Robin Aldcroft
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
5–11	3 October 2006	280349

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school serving a wide area of north-west Kent, including Gravesend and the Medway towns. Only 20% of its pupils live in Shorne village. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, with a small minority from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is broadly average, though it varies significantly between year groups. Attainment on entry varies from average to below average for different intakes. There has been a high turnover of teachers in the past two years, mainly in the infant classes.

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 where children grow into well-rounded, confident young people. They achieve well and their personal development is outstanding. As one parent put it, 'This is a school I am proud to send my child to and would recommend to anyone'. The pupils really enjoy both their lessons and the many other activities, such as clubs, visits and special events that the school provides to enrich their learning. Good teaching is founded on high expectations of both behaviour and academic achievement. The curriculum is carefully planned to promote creativity and active learning, as well as equipping pupils with the basic skills and understanding necessary to lead healthy and productive lives. Pupils develop mature and sensible attitudes and are very enthusiastic about their responsibilities. The Eco-Committee is a fine example of how the pupils are making a difference, not only within school, but through their commitment to wider environmental issues such as recycling and conservation. The leadership and management are good because the school's leaders are not complacent but strive continually to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Recent improvements to the Foundation Stage accommodation and curriculum ensure children get off to a good start and make good progress in their first year. Although standards in Year 6 are well above national averages, those in writing have lagged behind other areas. New initiatives in teaching and the curriculum have improved the quality of pupils' writing significantly. A slight dip in standards in mathematics in 2006 has triggered an instant response. A workable action plan and strategies are already in place to ensure standards return to their former high levels. Standards in Year 2 are similar to the national average, but have been erratic in the past three years, ranging from significantly above to just below average. More able pupils do not always reach high enough levels of attainment in writing and mathematics. Whilst acknowledging that this is partly due to high staff turnover in the infant classes, which has caused a lack of continuity and consistency in teaching, senior managers are taking steps to ensure that challenging targets are set for these pupils. In Years 3 to 6, there are very effective systems for tracking pupils' progress towards their targets. These enable teachers to identify pupils who are not making as much progress as they should be in a particular area. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress from when they start school through to Year 2 are not rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. Through regular and systematic monitoring of its performance, the school has formed a realistic view of its own effectiveness. With a very strong leadership team at the helm and a supportive and well-informed governing body, the school has a good capacity to build upon its successes and to raise standards still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Years 1 and 2 for the more able pupils in writing and mathematics.
- Devise more rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress from when they start school through to the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Most pupils start school with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. They build upon these well, reaching above average standards by the time they leave. Children make good progress in the Reception Year, and most reach the expected levels by the end of the year in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, slower progress in the past couple of years has resulted in a fall in standards from above average to average. This is because teachers' expectations for the more able pupils have not been high enough, especially in writing and mathematics. More ambitious targets are now being set for these pupils. The school has successfully raised standards in writing in Years 3 to 6, especially for the more able pupils. It is now focusing on mathematics after an unexpected dip in standards in the 2006 Year 6 national tests. Every class has challenging targets to meet in mathematics during the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being bear witness to the school's commitment to this aspect of their education. Pupils really enjoy school and put a great deal into it. They feel trusted and thrive on being given responsibility. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is first-rate. One parent commented, 'The children are taught a lot of "life skills" and appear very courteous and happy, with respect for others'. Excellent behaviour ensures a well-ordered school, where all pupils feel safe and bullying is rare. Attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy the healthy school meals and fruit snacks. They participate in a wide range of sports activities. From celebrations of harvest to fund-raising for charities, pupils grow in appreciation of the world around them, its diversity and their own responsibility for it. Members of the Eco-Committee represent their classes well and have a real impact on developing pupils' awareness of environmental issues. Good literacy, numeracy, computer and team-building skills prepare pupils well for their future life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lively teaching encourages positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are well planned to show exactly what pupils are expected to learn. The teachers' high expectations and ambitious but realistic targets for individual pupils lead to good achievement. However, expectations for more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not always been high enough in recent years, because assessment information has not been used effectively to set suitably challenging targets for these pupils. The situation is now being remedied.

Teachers in all year groups often remind pupils of their targets before they start work to ensure they keep them in mind. Lessons are interesting and engaging for pupils because teachers use a good variety of strategies and resources. Pupils know how they are expected to behave and respond accordingly so that teachers rarely have to interrupt the flow of the lesson to remind them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is planned well to take account of pupils' differing needs and interests. Teachers build in effective links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and creative. There is an excellent range of additional activities to enrich pupils' learning and personal development, including visits to places of interest, links with local secondary schools and very well attended after-school clubs. Sport, art and music have a high profile, and special events, such as a recent Science Week, do much to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. A new computer suite has enabled the school to improve its provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers are currently exploring ways to make more effective use of ICT as a tool for learning across the curriculum. Strategies to raise standards in writing and mathematics have not yet had a full impact in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall and those aspects relating to pupils' personal development are excellent. Concern for the pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's caring and supportive ethos. The school works closely with parents to support their children's learning. Adults set the example for pupils to follow, showing respect and consideration and valuing the pupils' contributions. Very good support for pupils with learning difficulties helps them to make good progress. Basic skills groups provide additional help for pupils whose literacy and numeracy skills need boosting. Counselling is available for pupils who lack confidence in communicating. Individual targets give pupils clear goals to aim for and there are very good procedures to check how well they are doing throughout Years 3 to 6. These systems are not as effective from Reception through to Year 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy head form a strong team with a clear vision, and they are good at developing leadership skills in others. They are ably supported by a knowledgeable, 'hands-on' governing body and subject leaders, all of whom share their commitment to achieving high standards. Thorough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, regular 'book looks' and talking to pupils clearly identify the right priorities for improvement. Detailed analysis of assessments and tracking records is having a marked impact on raising standards in

Years 3 to 6. This good practice has yet to be embedded in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Prompt action to tackle weaknesses in pupils' writing is having a beneficial effect on teaching and learning. A recent focus on developing investigative skills in science has been equally successful. Senior managers are particularly good at ensuring high levels of support for new and less experienced staff. This is closely tied in with the school's targets and priorities for development and includes opportunities for training and observing good practice in other schools.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my day with you all and can see how much you enjoy being there. That's not surprising because Shorne is a good school where all the adults take very good care of you and help you to grow into confident and mature young people. Your outstanding behaviour helps lessons to run smoothly so that you make good progress in your learning. The teachers expect you to do well and explain clearly what you are going to learn in each lesson. Apart from your lessons, there are lots of interesting things for you to do, such as taking part in clubs and special events. I was particularly impressed by the Eco-Committee, which is doing a really good job, not only making the school a better place but doing important things like recycling and composting. The adults who run the school listen to you and take note of your ideas. They are always looking for ways to make the school even better. There are a couple of things that the school could improve. One is to help a few of the younger pupils to reach higher standards in writing and mathematics. The other is to keep a closer eye on how well children are doing from when they start school in Reception through to the end of Year 2. I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Shorne.