

Shepley First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107663
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	287885
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Littlewood
Headteacher	Mrs Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Firth Street Shepley Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 8DD
Telephone number	01484 222754
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Age group	5–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school is situated in a relatively advantaged semi-rural area. The vast majority of children are from White British families; a small proportion is of mixed heritage. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are few in number. The school and community have experienced a very difficult time of late, with the death of the headteacher after a protracted illness. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2006 after undertaking several periods of acting headship. The building is partway through a programme of renovation, but still suffers from flooding during heavy rain. The school holds a variety of awards: Investors in People; ArtsMark and ActiveMark Gold; and the Football Charter Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Coming to this school did my child the world of good.' This is how a typical parent expressed the general view about Shepley First School. Children are also fulsome in their praise. When asked to identify what they appreciate about the school: 'I just like everything' is a typical response.

This is a good school with some outstanding features, despite having just emerged from a difficult phase. In many respects the school and its community have only just finished grieving the loss of a much-admired headteacher.

Children achieve well academically because teaching is good. Equally, the powerful care and support they receive results in first-rate personal development, which enables them to learn well. Behaviour and attitudes are often exemplary as demonstrated in lessons, in assemblies and at lunchtime. Children act as if they enjoy every moment, particularly in a school which provides so many additional opportunities, such as those for music. The joy with which they sing, for example, lifts the spirits. It is the satisfactory nature of the academic guidance, particularly the lack of specific and well-communicated targets for children to reach, which prevents care, guidance and support from being outstanding.

A superb curriculum contributes exceedingly well to children's development. Not just the very well organised programme in English, mathematics and science, but the varied and interesting tasks in art and design, history and design and technology. Music is a real strength because an active choir and orchestra extend learning wonderfully. Furthermore, the provision in physical education is strong. The school has created a superb network of support beyond the school to expand the curriculum and heighten well-being among children.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are very well above average, particularly in writing. They are even higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, so the school has progressed well since 2002. This level of high performance continues and by the end of Year 5, when children leave the school, attainment is exceptionally high compared to the national expectations for children of this age.

Leadership and management are good. They have had a positive effect on standards, but the hiatus in leadership and management, over a number of years, has delayed some necessary changes. The school's virtually accurate self-evaluation has, at the moment, a satisfactory effect on plans and their fulfilment. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not fully operational because a full complement of permanent staff was only achieved in January 2007. This is particularly true of the provision in Reception (Foundation Stage), which is now good, but there has been a lot of temporary teaching in recent years. So, the knowledge of exactly where children are up to and how they could do better are areas for further improvement. Judging by what has been achieved since September 2006, the capacity for further improvement is good. For example, all teachers now possess a detailed record of children's levels of attainment and have begun to analyse it, but there is much more evaluation to do. Moreover, the damage caused by flooding has been managed well to minimise the impact on children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor teaching and its effect on children's progress more systematically.
- Evaluate, in depth, the information from assessments to identify how teaching and learning could be improved even further.

- Implement methods designed to help children evaluate their own progress in lessons and over time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children's capabilities, on entry, are better than those typical for their age. Good progress means they reach above average standards by the end of Reception. This is quite conspicuous progress in personal development because many children lack motivation to do much for themselves at the beginning of the year. Thereafter, up to the end of Year 2, the good progress is more noticeable in writing and mathematics where standards have been exceptionally high for the last two years. By comparison, standards in reading, while above average, are not as high because learning to link letters with sounds is not mastered early enough. Children's progress dipped to satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 over the last two years, but achievement is good this year as a result of more settled teaching. Progress made in Year 5 continues to be outstanding. That is why children attain very well above the standards expected for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children influence every aspect of school life. This gives them a bearing, which manifests itself in mature behaviour and caring attitudes. Attendance is very well above the national average, which demonstrates how keen children are to be involved. They enjoy lessons immensely and know a great deal about keeping safe and healthy. However, it is the delight they draw from the school council that makes personal development so special. As one child said, 'We don't do politics, we just get things done.' Children benefit enormously from a rich array of opportunities such as links with local community, charity fundraising for Ghana, residential visits and making decisions about school rules. That is why spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exemplary. The strong financial and creative skills that children develop are embodied in the school's extended, and highly successful, project to build a theatre in the school grounds.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Parents say that the teachers give children a lot of confidence and that learning is fun. Inspection findings agree with these views, but judge the quality of teaching and learning to be good rather than outstanding. This is because the use of assessment is underdeveloped. There are good systems employed to assess children's work, but not to involve them in thinking about how well they have done. Nevertheless, lessons invariably contain a buzz of excitement, which causes children to respond enthusiastically. A child in Reception reacted typically by calling out, 'I like these' during a session of mental arithmetic. The few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included very well and progress well largely due to the good partnership between teachers and their capable assistants. Occasional relative weaknesses, such as higher attainers' work lacking extra challenge or teachers not using electronic whiteboards effectively, do not prevent learning from being good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The range of activities is extremely wide, beyond the basic programmes for English and mathematics. Children get a great deal of pleasure from, for example, learning French, singing and playing instruments, maypole dancing, learning cricket at Headingley and staying over in Cumbria. They are also involved closely in local industry. Some children, for example, worked with a local fabric company to design patterns for their material. Parents are proud of the school's links with the community and it is easy to see why. Children are involved with the two churches nearby, sing carols and play music for the elderly and are regularly represented at local music festivals. The way in which children learn valuable lessons about health and safety and participate in running the school equips them admirably for secondary education and the world of work. Learning is enjoyable because subjects are linked neatly together into relevant and engaging topics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Relationships within school, at all levels, are very positive, so bullying is rare. Children feel safe because protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working well. In all, the care and support that children receive is of the highest quality. The most striking aspect is the support children receive in making decisions about school improvements. There is scope for improvement in academic guidance, but the school has already begun to tackle this by making sure that all staff keep detailed records of assessments, an advance since 2002. Children receive some targets related to their work but sometimes these lack precision, so they find it hard to act on them. Moreover, teachers' positive marking makes few references to what needs to be improved. However, children do receive good guidance about effective styles of learning. Teaching about the functions of the brain and what these mean for different ways of learning is most useful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A prime indicator of good leadership and management is the way in which children talk proudly and knowledgeably about their work, which is so well displayed around the school. Links between the curriculum, children's enthusiasm for learning and their achievement are robust. In order to sustain this level of success, the headteacher has shown remarkable resolve, patience and skill in working with others. Governors have played their part well by being highly supportive and ensuring good value for money. The headteacher is aware that some aspects of children's progress slipped a little in the last two years, but has shown the capacity, with some success already, to rectify the situation. Teamwork is a strong point of the school, but subject and senior management lack definition. Job descriptions are being radically overhauled and redefined. However, this process is only partway through, so the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by staff and governors is not comprehensive enough.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	1
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	1
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	1

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?	1
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.

Annex A

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	3
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

Inspection of Shepley First School, Huddersfield, HD8 8DD

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days at your school.

You go to a good school that has outstanding aspects: the ways that you get involved in everything and the curriculum you study are superb. We know that you appreciate Shepley First because you told us so. Even when we were just observing you it was obvious how much you were enjoying yourselves. For example, in the rehearsals for Scheherazade you seemed to love the chance to sing and act. We regret not being able to see a full performance of the choir and orchestra. Some of the solo singing we heard whetted our appetite. Your school council is very active and you all get a lot from its decisions. The Golden Rules and the Standards displayed around school are really effective in reminding everyone about the best ways to treat other people. The ongoing project to turn your large cycle shed into a theatre fascinated us. You have already raised over œ6,000 and are still going. Just think of the skills that you are developing in terms of designing, raising funds and working with others. The range of subjects and topics that you study is excellent: history, music and physical education are obvious favourites. Your parents are very pleased with the school and we agree with what they have to say. We know that you were sad to lose your previous headteacher, but the water feature in the school's entrance, which you initiated, is a wonderful reminder and tribute.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested three things that will help. Your headteacher and teachers should analyse your test results and general work to find out, in detail, more about how you can improve. You should be more knowledgeable about your targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. So in writing, for example, you need to know precisely how to reach the next level. Finally, staff need to observe lessons, and look at your exercise books, more often to check on the progress that you are making. This will make sure that teaching is always good and sometimes outstanding. You can all help by trying to reach your targets and move on to the next ones. We know you can do it.