

Sharlston Community School (3-11)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108156
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	288033
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2007
Reporting inspector	James Kilner HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr P Loosemore
Headteacher	Mr Graham Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Hammer Lane Sharlston Common Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 1DH
Telephone number	01924 303920
Fax number	01924 303921

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2007
Inspection number	288033

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sharlston Community Primary School is average-sized and serves families in the former mining village of Sharlston, situated between Wakefield and Pontefract. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average, as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN). All pupils are White British and the number of pupils claiming free school meals is broadly average.

The school is Wakefield's resource for visually impaired pupils. The resource can accommodate up to eight pupils; currently only one pupil attends this unit.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sharlston Community Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education and gives satisfactory value for money. Some elements of the work of the school are good, particularly the inclusion of pupils from the visual impairment unit, the level of care pupils receive and the pupils' personal development and well-being.

The school is committed to raising attainment but has been thwarted in its recent efforts through staff absence, most notably that of the headteacher. This meant that senior leaders in the school had to be re-assigned from teaching roles, resulting in some well intentioned initiatives failing to impact sufficiently on achievement and standards. Following the return of the headteacher, the senior leadership team is back on track. Senior leaders are well placed to continue their work in monitoring, evaluating and improving key aspects of the work of the school with a clear commitment to move the school forward.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are broadly similar to most children of their age. Rates of progress vary throughout school with pupils achieving standards that are average by the end of Key Stage 2. A key factor in the varying rates of progress are the peaks and troughs in the quality of teaching. At best teaching can be good, even outstanding, but overall it remains satisfactory. Where teaching effectively encourages pupils to learn, there are high expectations and clear guidance as to how to reach the higher standards. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates and inspires pupils to investigate and learn, creating a buzz of excitement and opportunities to explore and share ideas with their peers. Less successful teaching involves lengthy introductions, low level activities and work insufficiently well matched to individual pupils' abilities. Following a lull, the senior leadership team is earnestly monitoring classroom practice once more, but pockets of satisfactory teaching remain. Consequently, the rates of pupils' progress have not been improving quickly enough.

Pupils enjoy their time in school. Their manners are exemplary and they behave well in lessons and around school. They are well cared for and feel safe, knowing there is an adult to turn to if they are upset. Playground buddies and the very popular 'wake-up-shake-up' mean fun, energetic and trouble free break times. Inclusion is good; pupils from the unit for the visually impaired are well supported and integrated into the daily life of the school. Brailed signs and large print texts are a feature of the school environment. Rates of attendance are unsatisfactory due, in some part, to a significant number of families who take holidays during term time. Whilst there was a good deal of support for the work of the school from parents, many expressed concerns about their lack of involvement in their children's learning with many feeling 'in the dark' about what was happening in school.

The Foundation Stage is well organized and the Nursery class provides a good curriculum for young children within a stimulating learning environment. In the early days in school, children's learning is focused on playing and working together. Activities emphasise the need to develop speaking and listening so that progress is good and children achieve well. Children transfer to the Reception class at the start of the term in which they become five years old. Consequently, the youngest children have only one term in this class prior to starting in Key Stage 1. Rates of progress slow through Reception class where provision becomes too 'teacher-directed' and outdoor learning is less well developed. The school is aware of the need to make changes to provision in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that pupils who start school one or two terms behind the other pupils are able to make better progress. The Foundation Stage leader

is taking a more proactive role to ensure more consistent continuity and progression for all children.

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are some exciting opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive inter-schools sport. Plans for the implementation of the revised literacy and numeracy strategy linked to a more exciting curriculum are well placed for introduction in September 2007.

The school has tackled the issues from the last inspection well. The school's self-evaluation is robust and accurate as demonstrated by all its key judgements correlating closely with those of the inspection findings. The sterling work of the senior leadership team and governors during the absence of the headteacher, combined with his return to school, demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils is consistently good in order that all reach their full potential.
- Improve rates of attendance.
- Improve lines of communication with parents and carers and ensure that there are increased opportunities for them to be involved in their children's learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When children start in Nursery class their skills are broadly average for their age. They make good progress through the Nursery class but this rate slows during their time in Reception. Whilst personal, social, physical and creative development is good, their language and literacy skills are less well developed and achievement at the end of the Foundation Stage is broadly average.

Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory with pupils reaching standards by age seven that are in line with national averages. There has been a strong focus on raising standards in writing and this is reflected in some early signs of improvement.

Standards fluctuate through Key Stage 2 but the national test results of Year 6 pupils in 2006 improved on previous years, particularly in English and mathematics. Due to the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher did not teach her Year 6 class for almost a full term this academic year. On her return to the classroom, despite some outstanding teaching and the school's best efforts to make up for lost time, standards for the current Year 6 cohort are just below the national average. This represents satisfactory progress. However, there are indications that pupils' progress is beginning to sustain improvement in other years, underpinned by increasingly effective use of the pupil tracking systems, secure teaching of the core subjects and targeted use of classroom assistants. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress but, because of more focused support, progress is good for those with a statement of special educational needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are learning to understand their feelings and are able to express their opinions particularly during school council meetings. All pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school. They are well behaved and are developing independence to make their own choices about their learning. All pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and are actively involved with staff and their peers when taking part in the daily wake-up-shake-up activities enjoyed by everyone. One pupil said, 'Charlston is the best school because we do lots of activities'. The personal, social and health education curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe and follow safe routines. The school works closely with the local church to promote spiritual awareness and caring attitudes. Pupils gain in confidence at Charlston School and leave suitably prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory, partly as a result of the high number of families taking holidays during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with examples of good and outstanding practice. This fluctuation matches closely to the varying rates of progress made by pupils in their time at Charlston School. Where there is good or better teaching, pupils without exception, achieve well. The majority of lessons are exemplified by teacher's good subject knowledge, good standards of behaviour and the willingness of all pupils to learn.

In the better lessons there is a good pace because teachers match the work well to the needs of the pupils. Lessons are lively and well planned. Teachers make effective use of the school's interactive whiteboards to add richness to lessons, for example in well chosen film clips to promote discussion of characters in literacy or to demonstrate the solving of logic problems in mathematics.

Pupils are aware of their own targets and are clearly guided through feedback in lessons and through marking on how to improve their work in order to reach higher standards. Teaching assistants supporting the work of the less able pupils are well briefed in the planning, know what they have to do to improve pupils' learning and discuss assessment with the teacher after the lessons. In these instances pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

A slow pace and lack of challenge to the more able result in some lessons being no more than satisfactory. Lengthy introductions and mundane worksheets fail to ignite the pupils' eagerness to learn. Generic comments in marking refer to presentation and give brief comments rather than referring directly how pupils might improve their work. Although the quality of teaching has improved, it is still too variable to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum ensures that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and that their personal development is good. There is an impressive range of out-of-class activities providing

opportunities for pupils to try and learn new skills. Sport, music and art are clearly enjoyed by many pupils. For example, in the ICT club very young children guided by older peers were able to animate their stories into short cartoon films. Some activities, such as 'book buddies', enable older pupils to willingly take a leading role in helping their younger friends to enjoy reading. The curriculum contributes well to improvements in pupils' moral and social development but there are too few opportunities within the curriculum to develop their cultural awareness. A priority for the leadership team is to raise cultural awareness. The well planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. The school has a wide range of intervention programmes to support the learning of less able pupils but it is difficult to judge the impact of these since monitoring is at an early stage of development.

The curriculum reflects national strategies and statutory requirements but the school has identified that there is more scope to tailor the curriculum more closely to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of all pupils. Plans are in place to begin linking the English, mathematics and science curriculum to other subjects from autumn term 2007.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care given to the pupils is good. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils feel safe and happy. The health and safety procedures enforced by the school are satisfactory. Child protection procedures are robust and pupils say they have adults in school they feel comfortable to talk to should the need arise. The support for pupils' personal development is good. The school has strong partnerships with a wide variety of agencies and professionals designed to help meet pupils' diverse needs. The school is resourced with a visual impairment unit, also used as the base for the outreach team. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well cared for, although mapping their individual progress against the intervention they receive is at an early stage of development.

Academic guidance given by teachers when marking pupils' work is satisfactory overall although not all teachers consistently follow the school's agreed policy on this. Consequently, some pupils are unsure as to how to improve their work in order to reach higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, reflecting the school's accurate self-evaluation. The recent reorganisation of the senior leadership team has enabled the school to successfully manage staff absences, most notably that of the headteacher. The senior leadership team has been recruited from teachers with exemplary classroom practice, ensuring high calibre role models who are able to coach others in the art of good teaching. They have a very clear view of their managerial role within school and, under the guidance of the deputy headteacher, they led the school successfully during the absence of the headteacher.

Classroom monitoring and work scrutinies are a regular feature of the work of the senior leadership team and the subject coordinators. This is providing vital information designed to boost achievement and is just starting to impact on current standards. Where resulting intervention has taken place to improve the quality of teaching, it has proved effective in

moving some of the satisfactory teaching to good, and the senior leadership team are determined to keep up this momentum.

A robust tracking system allows information on pupil progress to be checked regularly. This information forms the basis for discussion between the headteacher and class teachers on individual pupil progress. Currently this wealth of information is not utilised to track and monitor the impact of intervention programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The role of the special needs coordinator is being enhanced to ensure this monitoring proceeds quickly. The Foundation Stage leader is taking a more proactive role to ensure more consistent continuity and progression for all children from Nursery to Reception.

Governors meet their statutory obligations in all areas and play an effective part in challenging the work of the school. Recent appointments from the world of finance and education has strengthened the potential of this group to support and challenge the work of the school. Governors recognise the need to increase their overall involvement within the daily life of the school. The school has a good capacity to improve.

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.

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
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Many thanks for the warm and friendly welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we visited your school this week. From the moment we set foot in your school we were impressed by your good manners and politeness.

The reason we came to your school was to find out what was going well and what could be improved; we found out that:

- you behave well and your school includes everybody, particularly your friends in the visual impairment unit
- everyone in school cares for you well
- you have lots of opportunities to keep healthy and enjoy activities outside the classroom like 'Wake-up-Shake-up'.

We have asked your school to improve some things.

- To make sure all your lessons, in every year group, are really good so you all achieve well
- Too many of you do not attend as well as you should. We want the school to encourage you to come to school more regularly
- Quite a few of your parents are keen to be involved in your learning. We have asked the school to look at ways to make this possible. Also, the school is going to make sure your parents find out more about what is happening in school.

I know that you have some good ideas so you may want to think about how you can help to make Charlston school even better.