



# Shackleton Lower School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109526  
**Local Authority** BEDFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288414  
**Inspection dates** 10–11 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sheelagh Barnes

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Pearcey Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bedford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		Bedfordshire MK42 9LZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 352912
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	267	<b>Fax number</b>	01234 219984
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Miss Joy Wells
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann Parish
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 May 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4–9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10–11 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288414
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Shackleton Lower is an average sized school. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average. Fewer of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities than nationally, but the numbers with statements of special educational needs is above average. Many children transfer to the school from the local nursery, starting in the spring term, but children also come from a range of other settings. Attainment on entry to the Reception class covers the full range, but overall is well below the expected levels for children's ages. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006 and there have also been a number of recent changes to teaching staff. Prior to that time the school had an acting head teacher for one term. The school was also federated to another local school for five terms and one of the assistant headteachers was seconded there for two terms. The school has recently gained a Quality Mark, Artsmark Gold, Investors in People and Healthy School accreditations.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of pupils' overall achievement. Children get a sound start to their education in the Reception class. This continues so that pupils' progress and achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards are broadly average in reading by the end of Year 2 because of the very good progress and achievement of pupils in this area. Standards are below average in writing and mathematics, but this represents good progress and achievement from a low base. In Key Stage 2, there has been inadequate progress in the recent past, particularly in Year 3. However, currently, progress in Years 3 and 4 is at least satisfactory and often good. Achievement in reading is satisfactory so that by the end of Year 4 standards remain broadly in line with the expectation for pupils' ages. In writing and mathematics, achievement is also satisfactory overall but standards are below average by the end of Year 4.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils behave well and are encouraged to develop into caring and considerate members of society. They make a good contribution to their local community and to wider charity work through such things as raising money for the Blue Peter Appeal. Pupils enjoy lessons and are generally keen to come to school. Attendance is satisfactory. Parents are generally supportive of the school and appreciative of its work.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the recent past there has been some inadequate teaching in Year 3 and pupils did not make the progress expected of them. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and is also currently at least satisfactory and often good in Years 3 and 4. Teachers set suitably challenging targets for pupils with reference to their ages. However, pupils in all classes do not confidently know their individual targets. Assessment is satisfactory. The school has made assessment more rigorous and accurate, but is in the early stages of using this to individualise pupils' learning programmes. The curriculum is good, with a good range of interesting and exciting extra activities. Provision for pupils' care and welfare is satisfactory and good attention is paid to health and safety issues.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Subject leaders are beginning to develop systems to monitor the progress of individuals and groups with greater rigour and accuracy. Governors are supportive of the school and suitably involved in evaluation and development planning. The school has identified the need for staff and governors to develop skills so that they have a more consistent approach to the use of assessment data in planning for improvements. The headteacher has already established good relationships both within the school and with parents. There are good links with other schools and colleges. The headteacher appreciates the strengths of the school and is keen to build further improvements. The staff and governors have improved the building and are creating an attractive and secure learning environment. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall progress that pupils make in writing and numeracy.
- Ensure that information from marking and assessment is used consistently in setting targets for pupils and sharing this information with them.
- Refine and develop skills of leaders and governors in the analysis of data and setting of objectives for school improvement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall for pupils from all groups. Children make steady and satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage but standards are still well below those expected at the start of Year 1. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress overall and very good progress in reading. Standards are broadly average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Achievement in the recent past has been inadequate for the youngest pupils in Key Stage 2, but this is no longer the case. Currently, achievement and progress in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory overall and in many lessons it is good. Standards are below those expected for pupils' ages in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4. However, they are in line with expectations for reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and English as an additional language make sound progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. Pupils behave well and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and dealt with promptly and consistently. Most pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes and attend regularly. They respond well to the school's approaches to promote healthy eating. The school has good strategies to promote attendance but the rate of attendance is satisfactory due to the prolonged absences of a very few pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to take care of each other and consider other people's feelings. Children in the Reception class quickly start to learn the routines of school. Pupils contribute, through the school council, to decisions about the school. They make good progress in developing qualities that will enable them to contribute effectively to the wider community and the workplace such as learning to listen, respecting the views of others and learning to adopt safe practices.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features. The teaching of reading is good. In the Reception class the new staff are providing satisfactorily for the children's needs, helping them settle successfully. New systems are being established which have not yet had time to have a full impact on children's learning. Some teaching was inadequate in Year 3 last year, but currently all teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good. This is improving the rate of progress that these pupils are making now they are in Year 4. Teachers plan the work for pupils carefully, making sure that it meets their needs, including for those who find learning difficult or who attend the nurture group. They use computers and other technology well to engage pupils' interest and demonstrate what they are expected to learn. Pupils are keen to learn, and the older ones relish being challenged. Teachers assess their pupils' work satisfactorily, but the whole school systems for monitoring and tracking the progress that pupils make are at an early stage of development. This limits the way in which this information is used by teachers to plan targets for individuals and groups and share the information with pupils to ensure that they achieve all they can.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is well planned coverage of the different subjects, enriched by a good range of visits and visitors and after-school activities. Pupils have good opportunities to use their skills in numeracy and literacy and information and communication technology in other subjects. The support for pupils with learning difficulties or who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. The art curriculum is particularly strong. The school is a vibrant and colourful environment with high quality work in different media, some of which was produced in partnership with visiting artists. Each class also has an annual email exchange with working artists around the world. There is a good programme to develop pupils' personal, social and health education and to encourage them to be responsible young citizens. They develop a good understanding of other cultures through well planned work in different subjects.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. Pupils are cared for sensitively in a very welcoming and friendly environment. Provision for pupils to learn to be healthy is good. All staff promote healthy lifestyles well. There are satisfactory arrangements for child protection and to ensure pupils remain safe. The nurture group is effective in enabling vulnerable pupils to access learning. The school has refined its systems to check on how much progress pupils make and has started to share this information

with pupils. However, not all of pupils know exactly what they should focus on to reach the next stages in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, together with the two assistant headteachers, has developed a sensible plan to improve standards and ensure equality of opportunity for pupils from all groups based on sound self evaluation. Leadership and management of individual subjects are satisfactory. The school acknowledges that skills in analysing data and using the information to developing measurable steps for improvement are variable and so has plans for training. Governors are strong supporters of the school and are well informed. However, they have identified the need to train to develop confidence in interpreting data to provide more challenge to the school and more actively participate in development planning. Systems for financial management are good and virtually all of the recommendations of the most recent financial audit have been implemented. Resources are deployed appropriately and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

12 January 2007

Dear Children

Shackleton Lower School, Pearcey Road, Bedford, MK42 9LZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently and for being so polite and friendly. We really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. The things that particularly impressed us were:

- You behave well and take good care of each other.
- All the adults work hard together to make school a friendly place that you enjoy.
- You are taught to respect each other's views and learn a lot about your different backgrounds.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors work hard to make the school an attractive and pleasant place to be.
- You make good progress in learning to read.
- The teachers plan the subjects you are taught well, so that you have a lot of interesting and exciting things to learn about.
- You are taught about how to be healthy and take care of your body.

The things we have asked your school to do next are:

- Help you to do even better in writing and in numeracy.
- Teachers to use what they find out from marking your work to let you all know clearly what you need to do next to get better in your work.
- Teachers in charge of subjects and the governors to find out even more about how well you do and how to use this to make the school even better.

We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes, Mr Herbert, Mrs Richmond

Inspection team