

# Shotley Bridge Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114037
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	289786
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Herring

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Maurice Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Denise Todd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Snows Green Road Shotley Bridge Consett County Durham DH8 0ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 503248
<b>Fax number</b>	01207 582865

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Shotley Bridge Juniors is a smaller than average school serving a fairly affluent rural area. Almost all pupils are White British and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. No child is at an early stage of learning English. Pupils enter the school with standards that are generally above average for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Shotley Bridge Juniors is a good school where pupils' personal development is outstanding. Many parents are delighted at how much their children enjoy coming to school and participate in the good variety of activities it has to offer.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher has used her exceptional vision and drive over the last three years to build a confident team that has improved standards and raised the self-esteem of adults and pupils. The school's rigorous evaluation of its work is accurate in most respects, though it has been too modest in judging pupils' personal development, which is outstanding. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations and behaviour is impeccable both in lessons and at playtimes. Very good relationships in school help pupils to feel completely safe. Pupils understand the advantages of healthy food and exercise and benefit from the school's good links with the Community Sports College. Pupils' contribution to the community through their choral work and sport is excellent. Their good level of basic skills and varied responsibilities in school prepare them well for later life.

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. The school's concerted actions to improve writing have led to good improvement in English, with over half of the pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher Level 5 in the 2006 national tests. The school's efforts to improve standards in mathematics have resulted in an increase in the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 from 54% in 2004 to over 80% in 2006; however, the number achieving the higher level is below average and more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they can. Inspection evidence suggests that the current emphasis on developing problem solving skills is helping to increase the challenge for more able pupils. Nevertheless, fewer pupils reach the higher levels in mathematics than in English.

Teaching is consistently good and so pupils learn well and make good progress. The curriculum is interesting and varied and pupils are cared for and supported well. Over the past three years the school has developed good systems for identifying and supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at an early stage. The decision by the effective governing body to increase staffing and resources have helped to improve pupils' achievement overall.

There have been good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in English and information and communication technology (ICT). The strong systems now in place for evaluating the school's work and planning improvements indicate the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for more able pupils in mathematics to match those in English.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils often enter Year 3 with standards that are above average, although this can vary from year to year. They make good progress during their time in school because of good teaching and the effective systems now in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. In the 2006 national tests, standards were above average overall. As this group of pupils entered the school with standards that were broadly average, they clearly achieved well. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English

was well above average, reflecting the school's success in improving writing. In mathematics the number of pupils attaining the expected level was above average, though the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was just below average. Inspection evidence shows a slight improvement this year because of better planned opportunities for pupils to use their skills to solve problems. Nevertheless, the number of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics is still lower than in English.

Good improvements in the provision and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have enabled them to achieve more and make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils grow in maturity and confidence as they move through the school and by the time they reach Year 6 they are sensible independent learners. When accepting responsibilities as playground buddies, prefects, or house captains they are good role models for other pupils. Pupils' awareness of their social, moral, cultural and spiritual heritage is outstanding. They learn important values such as being honest and trustworthy, are sensitive to the needs of others and appreciate the clear systems of rewards and sanctions. Pupils say they feel safe in school and bullying is not a problem. They like one another and firm friendships have been established. Pupils welcome the many opportunities they are given to contribute to the community through singing at events and participating in sports. Opportunities to eat healthily, the well organised fruit scheme and the chances to share in physical exercise at lunchtime and at the many after school clubs are taken enthusiastically. Solid achievement and excellent behaviour and attitudes to work put them in a strong position to get the most out of their school life and their future beyond school. Attendance is good though just a few families lower the figures by taking holidays in term time.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Enthusiastic and consistently good teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning, progress and standards. Leaders and managers have achieved this through the regular and meticulous checking of the quality of teaching and careful assessment of learning. Imaginative activities to improve writing have been in place for some time and have resulted in improved standards in English. Teachers are building more practical problem-solving activities into mathematics lessons, but this development is at an early stage and not yet having a full effect on pupils' learning.

Thorough planning, clear organisation and effective use of modern technologies are all strong features of teaching. Pupils respond well to interesting and stimulating activities and they rise to the high expectations of them to work hard. Homework activities are creative; one parent commended the use of maths games instead of worksheets to extend learning at home. Lessons build step by step on what teachers have assessed their pupils can already do. This information is used particularly well in literacy and in mathematics and is contributing effectively to the improvements made in pupils' achievements.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Pupils achieve well because the school gives careful consideration to meeting their varying needs. The system of teaching pupils in sets of similar ability for literacy and numeracy is helping to provide suitable challenge and support for most pupils. This is effective in raising standards. The identification and subsequent intervention put in place to boost pupils' achievement in literacy is working well for pupils of all levels of ability.

Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to solve problems have been increased but have not yet had a full impact on standards of more able pupils. Recent investment in new books and promoting a love of reading amongst pupils are given high priority and are helping to raise standards. Resources for ICT have been greatly improved since the last inspection and pupils are using and developing their computing skills well in other subjects. A wide range of opportunities in music, drama and sport enriches the curriculum. The introduction of French is making a good contribution to developing better speaking and listening skills and pupils' enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of all its pupils and all the recommended procedures for safeguarding their welfare are in place. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and match work to their needs. Parents are very appreciative of how staff care for and support their children and pupils say they feel safe and secure in all they do. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively and make good progress. Pupils benefit from very good support and guidance for their personal development. The established practices enable pupils to develop positive personal esteem and confidence as a result of good achievement. Marking is thorough and is used well across the school. Useful assessment procedures are in place across the curriculum. They are best developed in English and mathematics where they are helping to accelerate pupils' academic progress. In other subjects some assessment procedures are still developing.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is led and managed well. Many parents and staff pay tribute to the outstanding vision and energy of the headteacher, who has built an enthusiastic team and successfully led the school forward over the last three years. The school's largely accurate self-evaluation is based on a thorough and honest analysis of its work by all the staff and provides a good basis to plan improvement.

A new leadership group of subject coordinators has been created since the last inspection. These experienced and enthusiastic teachers are taking on the necessary training to bring about improvements in their subject. Clear systems for assessing and tracking pupils' work are now in place and are helping to raise achievement. The school has been creative in bringing about improvements in writing. For example, pupils are being enthused by the whole-school target of using drama to develop good language skills and enliven pupils' written work. This has led to a very good improvement in writing standards. The school's actions to improve mathematics

have resulted in a good increase in the number of pupils attaining the expected level but initiatives to improve the proportion attaining the higher level have not yet had a full impact.

Governance is good. At the request of the headteacher, the governors agreed to increase expenditure on staffing and resources to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at an early stage. These pupils are now achieving well.





## Annex A

## 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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<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>	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

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

14 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shotley Bridge Junior School, County Durham, DH8 0ES

Thank you for making Mrs Evans and me so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in the school council. We agree with you that Shotley Bridge Juniors is a good school, and we think your attitudes to work and your behaviour are excellent. Well done!

You do well because the school is well organised, teaching is good, and you all try your best. What was very clear to us was how much you enjoy school and the good range of activities that is on offer. You must feel proud when you receive an award for your efforts in the Friday assembly. We could also see how proud you made your parents feel.

You make good progress in school. By the time you leave Year 6 you reach a high standard. Last year pupils in Year 6 did particularly well in English, with many achieving a Level 5. To make things even better we have asked the school to help more pupils to achieve a Level 5 in mathematics, so that it is similar to English. You can help by continuing to work hard when solving problems.

Good luck to you all for the future; we had a delightful two days in your school.

Best wishes

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector