



Shotley Bridge Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114038
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289787
Inspection dates 16–17 January 2007
Reporting inspector Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Benfieldside Road
School category	Community		Shotley Bridge, Consett
Age range of pupils	4–7		County Durham, DH8 0SQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01207 504847
Number on roll (school)	123	Fax number	01207 504847
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Michael McBride
		Headteacher	Miss Margaret Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 16–17 January 2007	Inspection number 289787
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small infant school serves an advantaged village in Derwentside. Only a few pupils have free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a below average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a recently opened breakfast club on site. The school has received many awards including, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, NAACE Mark, ICT Mark, Artsmark and Healthy School Award.

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 Infant School has much to be proud of. Pupils' excitement and enjoyment of learning, the well above average standards reached in the national tests, outstanding relationships between pupils and teachers and the strong leadership, support and encouragement provided by the headteacher contribute to the judgement that this is a good school with outstanding features. Parents appreciate the ease with which their children settle and enjoy school too. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter is happy and confident'. The school has contributed to this through their nurturing approach. The headteacher's evaluation of the school's work is spot on in every respect. Actions to improve writing are having a tremendous impact on raising standards due, in part, to some outstanding teaching and the excellent, widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards on entry to school are above what is typically expected of other children. Achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and children reach standards that are slightly better than the standards expected for their age. Standards are well above average in Year 2. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress, especially in the mixed age class, throughout Years 1 and 2. A key reason for pupils' enjoyment of school is the high priority given to fostering enjoyment of learning. The buzz of anticipation as Year 2 pupils learned about Beowulf was a delight to see. Pupils' excellent ICT skills mean they are able to gather a wide range of information to aid their understanding of, for example, 'gargoyles'. The curriculum is outstanding because of the recent priority to making purposeful links between subjects and identifying the key skills to be developed along with a wide range of visits and visitors.

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding teaching of literacy. Warm and caring relationships, excellent use of ICT and high expectations and challenge are consistent features in most classes. Pupils know what to do to improve their work, especially in writing, because of detailed guidance provided on their work and the exemplary shared evaluations at the end of literacy lessons. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is improving, as a result of staff training and a complete reorganisation of the two Foundation Stage classes. However, there is a lack of challenge in some of the play activities.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Assessments are carefully and rigorously checked each half term to identify pupils' progress and take effective action to provide additional support where required. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet government requirements. Pupils say they feel safe. They keep fit as a result of good links with a local football club and regular physical education. The Healthy School award reflects the high priority to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features in the breadth of knowledge of the headteacher and her high expectations for all pupils and staff. The school gives good value for money and has a good capacity to improve, based on

the improvements since the last inspection and the school's clear understanding of the way ahead.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenge in play activities for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time in school. Children's standards when they start school are above average in all areas of learning, and particularly high in speaking and personal, social and emotional development. Progress is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and standards are just above average in all areas of learning by the time children start in Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the 2006 national assessments. A below average proportion of children achieved the higher level in writing. This is a key priority for the school this year. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in writing are above average as a result of a whole school concerted effort to improve and introduce more innovative writing activities. Pupils write fluently and are very confident writers. Standards in ICT are above average, as exemplified by the pupils' descriptions of animated mythical creatures made using digital video recorders. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the well targeted support they receive and the close liaison with parents and external agencies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Their enjoyment of learning is clear. When describing a visit to the seaside, a Year 2 pupil said, 'We made mermaids in the sand, it was great'. Links with a neighbouring secondary school and a local football team provide extra coaching, which is very popular. The need to eat healthily and keep fit is evident in the day to day life of school; for example, milk and fruit are provided daily. Behaviour is good. Pupils fully understand the rewards system and find their earned 'privilege' time a great bonus at the end of the week. Pupils demonstrate high levels of responsibility through the mini-buddy system. Attendance is slightly above average and has improved with the introduction of a new scheme, which has led to a reduction in one-off absences. School is a haven of safety due to the strong systems of care shown by all staff, especially the lunchtime supervisors. Pupils contribute to several community activities and, through their support of various charities, become aware of their responsibilities to others less fortunate than themselves, for example, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), sheltered housing in the local area and support for a child in Africa. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are used well to develop children's awareness of themselves and responsibilities to others. Pupils grow in confidence and independence during their time in school and this, with their good

academic skills, ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute well to their learning and interest in lessons. Teachers have high expectations and provide good levels of challenge for all pupils, who achieve well as a result, especially in Key Stage 1. Relationships are excellent in most classes. Assessment procedures are robust. Pupils' work is marked rigorously and they are provided with succinct guidance on how to improve. All weekly planning is thorough and shows clearly what the more and less able pupils have to learn. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a real difference to the learning of pupils with additional needs. At times, pupils become restless when they have been sitting for too long. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is improving and is now generally good because of improvements to planning and the balance between whole class teaching and well focused group work. However, there is a lack of challenge in the activities the children choose to do. Parents are provided with good guidance on how to support their child with homework as well as regular curriculum meetings.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The recent improvements to the organisation of the curriculum, the enriching of basic skills teaching through the very effective use of ICT, stimulating books and the use of the outdoor environment all contribute to the outstanding judgement. Additionally, all subjects are combined and linked with basic skills to provide a cohesive and relevant curriculum. The current mythical mayhem topic is relished by the pupils because of the opportunities for creativity and imaginative activities. This is particularly noticeable in the tremendous enthusiasm for the legend of Beowulf in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have a good understanding of the wider world because of international links and their weekly French lessons. After school clubs, such as art and ICT, are well supported.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A strong ethos of care pervades the school. Arrangements to protect pupils are in place. Pupils trust their teachers and know they can turn to them if they need to discuss something. Arrangements to facilitate a smooth transition to the junior school are appreciated by parents. Assessment procedures are robust and used to track the progress of individual pupils on a half termly basis. Unusually, the school has recently introduced assessment of the pupils' personal, health and social development with

issues raised shared with all staff so pupils are provided with the additional support they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a calm and influential steer to the school's work. Her clarity of vision and prompt actions to deal with issues that might adversely affect pupils' learning are second to none. She leads a team of committed staff effectively and has very sensitively and compassionately dealt with staffing issues in the recent past. She is knowledgeable and supports her senior management team ably. Self-evaluation is good. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the curriculum are frequent and serve to keep everyone abreast of progress towards key priorities. As a result, development planning is an accurate reflection of the school's needs and the school is clear about how to improve. Parents appreciate the prompt actions taken to any concerns they may have and the ready welcome they receive when visiting school. Governors are kept well informed by the thorough headteacher's reports to their termly meetings and rightly support and challenge as required. The chair is very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and the areas that require improvement. Recent developments to increase the involvement of governors in monitoring the school's work are good.

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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 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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	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.

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

Shotley Bridge Infants' School

Benfieldside Road

Shotley Bridge

Consett

County Durham

DH8 0SQ

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for making my visit to your school so memorable. I am writing to let you know what was good about your school and what I have asked to be improved.

- You work hard and enjoy coming to school.
- You are really lucky that your teachers are so brilliant in using ICT to help you learn.
- Your teachers plan very exciting activities to help you improve your writing.
- Your headteacher makes sure you are well cared for and kept safe in school.

Children in the Foundation Stage really enjoy themselves and I think this could be even better with some more exciting and challenging activities.

Thank you again and good luck for the rest of the term. I hope you continue to enjoy reading about Beowulf.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector