



Sherard Primary School and Community Centre

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 119991
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291597
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Grange Drive
School category	Community		Melton Mowbray
Age range of pupils	4–11		LE13 1HA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01664 565124
Number on roll (school)	323	Fax number	01664 481330
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John A Herlihy
		Headteacher	Alison Wright
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	13–14 September 2006	291597

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sherard Primary and Community Centre is a larger than average school. Nearly all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, although eight other ethnic backgrounds are represented. Within the school is a unit for pupils with learning difficulties. This means there is an above average proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need. The school serves the local community as a base in the evening and also offers a breakfast and after-school club. The present headteacher has been in post since January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The headteacher is determined to make this school a better place for the pupils. With the support of the local authority, she has recently instigated a thorough review of provision. This has accurately identified the school's successes and its areas for development. Recognising that in the past, self-evaluation has been insufficiently rigorous, improved procedures are in place. Now all know what needs to be done and evaluation is becoming more robust as the governors, headteacher and key subject leaders focus on checking how well pupils learn. A revised system of tracking and target setting has been established, and pupils are starting to know more about how to make their work better. The sense of corporate responsibility for improvement is developing, as is the accountability of teachers for pupils' performance and the standards they attain.

Throughout the school, standards are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science but in writing they are below average. Although good strategies have been introduced to improve writing, not all teachers are secure in the knowledge of how to implement these new ideas. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is because teaching is mainly satisfactory, although, there is some good practice in both key stages. Good relationships ensure that in most instances pupils want to learn. In Years 1 and 2 in particular, there is a buzz of excitement as pupils eagerly carry out their work. However, in all classes sometimes pupils' progress is too slow because assessment information is not used consistently well to plan work that meets all pupils' needs, especially those of the more able. Also, in Years 3 to 6 some lessons lack pace as teachers spend too long talking to pupils and give them insufficient time to carry out independent work. The support given to pupils with learning difficulties is good and these pupils make good progress. They are included well in all school activities. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children make sound progress and standards are average. Although the curriculum for these young children is satisfactory, planned opportunities for outdoor learning are limited.

There are some real strengths, however, throughout the school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. A good start is made in the Foundation Stage where children quickly feel happy and safe. Good opportunities to understand the importance of living in a community along with good pastoral care help pupils to enjoy school. Attendance is good, as is behaviour. Good enrichment activities engage pupils' interest well as they speak very enthusiastically about theme days, residential visits and visitors to the school. Pupils say, 'During theme days we work much better, as learning is fun and exciting!' Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and they have a good understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lives. They trust the adults in the school, knowing there is someone to speak to if there is a concern.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' knowledge of how to teach writing in order to raise standards.

- Use assessment information effectively to plan activities that meet the range of pupils' needs, particularly the more able.
- Increase the pace of learning in lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Provide more planned outdoor learning opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's skills on entry to the Foundation Stage match those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they enter Year 1, a significant majority attain the standards expected in all six areas of learning. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science.

Achievement is satisfactory. However, attainment in reading is higher than in writing where standards are below average throughout the school. Also, too few pupils attain the higher levels in all three subjects as more able pupils do not always receive the work they are capable of. Although pupils with learning difficulties attain much lower standards than their peers their achievement is good because of good focused support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The strong emphasis placed on personal development in the Foundation Stage bears fruit throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. During lessons, most pupils work hard and behave well. There is, however, an underlying restlessness in some lessons in Years 5 and 6 that slows pupils' progress. During discussions, these pupils express frustration with work that is sometimes too easy.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and social development is enhanced through residential visits and close links with a nearby special school. Pupils' cultural development, however, is limited. Although pupils know about major world faiths, they have limited knowledge of the multicultural world in which they live.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and live a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to the school and the wider community through the school council and different fund raising events. The preparation for their next stage of education is sound. This aspect is not better, because of pupils' weak writing skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although there is some good teaching there is too much variation in teaching quality. This leads to inconsistent

progress. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn in a lively, well planned environment. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their work. One pupil, for example, said, 'We are so excited!' at the start of a good practical science lesson. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are less enthusiastic about their work because too many lessons lack pace and sparkle. Teachers' introductions are too long. Too much time is spent listening to the teacher, leaving limited time for pupils to carry out independent work.

In English, new ways of teaching writing are leading to some improvements, but not all teachers know how to carry out these new methods effectively. Also, some teachers do not adapt work well enough to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. However, good relationships mean that behaviour and concentration are often good so that pupils make sound gains in learning. Pupils with learning difficulties are included well in lessons and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, although work remains to be done on planning to fully meet the needs of more able pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory, but opportunities for children to learn outdoors are insufficient. An effective personal, social and health education programme is having a positive influence on pupils' good personal development.

The school provides a good range of enrichment activities which the pupils thoroughly enjoy. These include theme days, day trips, residential visits, visitors, after-school clubs and very good links with local schools. The school successfully engages the pupils' interests through these activities and pupils say 'these activities are better than normal lessons. They are more fun and we work better!'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care, however, is good. Good procedures are in place to ensure health and safety and child protection. The good links with external agencies including the educational welfare officer, the school nurse, the local police and Family Steps ensure strong support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties. Parents report that their children are happy at school and are positive about the school's commitment to their safety. Academic guidance is satisfactory. A revised system for tracking pupils' academic progress has been introduced, and information on pupils' attainment is now shared satisfactorily with teachers and teaching assistants. Although pupils have targets for improvement in writing they are not clear about how to achieve these targets. As yet they do not have targets for reading or mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The recent audit of provision has clearly confirmed the headteacher's perception and identified what is necessary to raise standards and achievement. In the past, self-evaluation has not been rigorous enough and weaknesses have gone unchecked. Governors and staff have recognised this and put into place an action plan which is having a positive influence on provision throughout the school. Pockets of good practice are emerging, for example, using innovative ways to improve pupils' grammar and punctuation skills. Parents and pupils are consulted satisfactorily about what goes on in the school.

The new senior management team and key subject leaders are learning how to monitor and evaluate more rigorously, focusing clearly on pupils' achievement. A system whereby staff can be held more accountable for pupils' performance has been now put into place. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are not afraid to take difficult decisions. However, although they have not been challenging enough in the past, this is improving. The school is at the start of embedding a culture of continuous improvement and motivating staff to work together towards common goals. The recent improvements indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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?	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	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

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	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	3
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	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.

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

- Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. Your willingness to talk made it easy for us to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Sherard Primary School. Yours is a satisfactory school and the things that we particularly like about it are
- You enjoy learning and you attend school very regularly.
- You get on well with each other and behave well.
- Staff take good care of you and help you feel happy at school so that you can concentrate on your learning.
- Theme days, visits, visitors and extra clubs help bring learning to life for you.
- The school works well with other people in the community to give you extra opportunities and support those who need extra help.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Help you all to become much better at writing.
- Use information about what you know already to plan activities that make you all think hard.
- Give you more time in lessons to work independently.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to work outdoors.

We enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Furness Lead inspector