



Shipston-on-Stour Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125520
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 294634
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary	School address	Station Road
School category	Foundation		Shipston-on-Stour
Age range of pupils	4–11		CV36 4BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01608 661266
Number on roll (school)	320	Fax number	01608 662780
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Hudson
		Headteacher	Anastasia Griffith
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2005		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 294634
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Children start this large school with the expected levels of attainment for their age. Their socio-economic circumstances are average. However, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average and an increasing proportion has behaviour difficulties that affect learning. A small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds with English as an additional language. The school has the Healthy Schools Bronze Award. When it was inspected in 2005, it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to challenge for pupils, the tracking of their progress, and the capacity of senior managers to monitor and evaluate standards and achievement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Changes, which began before the inspection in November 2005, have now begun to bear fruit. Good leadership and management have brought the school a long way in a relatively short time. Significant improvements in the way the school collects, analyses and uses assessment information and tracks pupils' progress have successfully improved the school's effectiveness. It is now satisfactory. Whilst overall achievement is satisfactory in most classes, pupils now make good progress. The school has strengthened its provision for the Foundation Stage and that too is now good. The impact of the changes is not yet fully evident in the average standards reached at the end of the Reception year in 2006, but children currently in the Reception classes are making good progress.

Standards are above average overall by Year 6. English, in which standards are average, is the weakest subject, and writing is the weakest aspect of it. However, the strong focus on improving writing is beginning to pay off. Reasons for this are that writing is promoted and marked well in all subjects, and pupils have challenging targets which they understand and know how to reach. Teaching is satisfactory overall but it too is improving. Mostly good teaching was observed during the inspection. However, some lessons still occasionally lack challenge and pace, and there are still inconsistencies in teachers' marking. The rigorous checks made on teaching and learning are helping to tackle these issues systematically.

The headteacher and governors are passionate about school improvement. Their vision is shared by a dedicated, hardworking team, highly focused on raising achievement. The effective care, guidance and support given to pupils ensure their good personal development and good behaviour. This and pupils' learning are equally well supported by a good, well planned curriculum. The school's evaluation of its own work is rigorous and accurate and this contributes to the good capacity for further improvement. The local authority has played an important part in helping the school to get this far. It is continuing to support the school, particularly for learning and behaviour, recognising that there is more work to do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Speed up the process to improve writing throughout the school.
- Eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in marking and in providing challenge for all pupils in all classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In most years, children make satisfactory progress and reach the nationally expected goals by the end of their Reception year. However, children currently in the Reception

classes are doing better and make good progress because provision in the Foundation Stage has improved.

In 2006, a much higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 had learning difficulties and disabilities than is usual for the school. Standards were below average in Year 2 but all pupils achieved at least satisfactorily. Standards are above average in Year 6. Overall, achievement and standards have improved since the last inspection.

The school set itself challenging targets for both Year 2 and Year 6. It exceeded the targets it set for Year 2 and only just missed its overall targets for English and mathematics for Year 6. However, in Year 6, the school missed its target at the higher level in English by a greater margin because of weaknesses in writing. It has worked very hard work to improve writing and this is beginning to pay off. In Year 2, although standards in writing overall were below average, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was higher than in most schools. In all year groups, pupils use their writing skills well in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their attitudes are positive. Pupils feel safe and the vast majority behave well. For those who find it difficult to do so effective strategies are in place to help, but still their behaviour does sometimes disrupt learning.

Pupils work together and support each other effectively in lessons and around the school. They rise well to the challenges presented to them to influence decision making and they contribute greatly to the school and wider community. Pupils described as a 'privilege' their jobs as school councillors, monitors, house captains and peer mediators. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Their improving progress and their participation in enterprise activities, including, for example, studying world trade issues, prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is improving and much of it is now good, including that in the Foundation Stage. Lessons are calm, well planned and well organised. Teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to do and they ensure pupils are too. Routines, including those for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, are now well established and consistently implemented. Some teachers develop pupils' thinking skills really well, including through their marking. Pupils very much appreciate this and rise to the additional challenge it presents. This good practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

In most classes, good pace and challenge are improving pupils' progress. In a minority of classes, the pace of lessons sometimes slows too much or an activity continues for too long or lacks challenge. Pupils then become restless and their progress slows. However, teachers know their pupils well, usually manage their behaviour effectively, and use a good range of strategies to get them back on task. For example, in one class, pupils were heard to say, 'Oh no, not brain gym again,' but then joined in enthusiastically and returned to their work refreshed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum links different subjects together effectively. Teachers plan to help pupils see how what they do in one subject can be used in another. This is particularly evident in the recent improvements in marking writing, wherever it occurs. While more remains to be done, this new approach is improving pupils' overall progress. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. This contributes effectively to their personal development, safety and well-being. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and for those for whom English is an additional language. A good range of activities, visits and visitors in and outside the normal school day enrich and enhance the curriculum. For example, the 'Black Hole' project has brought science alive for the pupils, and visitors from different cultures have raised their awareness of cultural diversity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Positive relationships and good pastoral support help pupils grow into well rounded individuals in this happy, friendly school. Robust procedures for safeguarding pupils ensure they are safe and well cared for. Pupils have some concerns about lunchtime activities and supervision, which the school is tackling imminently. Pupils' academic progress is now tracked well. Pupils know their targets, how to achieve them, and what they have to do to improve their work. There are also some good examples of pupils accurately assessing their own and other pupils' learning. Most teachers mark pupils' work well, giving them clear pointers for improvement. Pupils commented on how some teachers ask questions in their marking that 'really challenge us to think'. However, this good practice is not yet fully embedded throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's very clear determination to raise achievement is shared by staff and governors. Her high profile around the school, perceptive checks on teaching and learning, good support for staff and the perceptive deployment of them, and good

relationships with pupils and parents have all contributed to the school's growing success. Governors have a good knowledge of the school. They are well informed, provide good support for the headteacher, and take an active part in checking the school's performance and challenging it to improve further. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. It knows what it needs to do to improve further.

Key staff now fulfil their roles well. The rigorous analysis of all assessment information, begun before the previous inspection, has provided senior managers with good information about pupils' progress in each year group. This has enabled them to take timely action to support learning further when necessary, and has helped to drive the improvement so far. The school has more to do to bring English, especially writing, up to the same standard as mathematics and science. However, the senior team have a clear understanding of the work that remains and their strategies, including improved provision in the Foundation Stage, are beginning to show some success. All of this contributes to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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	3
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

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You clearly enjoy school and like your teachers to challenge you to think and improve your own and other's work. Your school is satisfactory. That means there are good points and a small number of areas that need a bit more work. Here is a summary of the good points.

- The teaching is improving and this is helping to improve your progress, especially as what you are taught is now good.
- The good care, guidance and support the school gives you means that almost all of you are polite and well behaved, know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, and understand how to contribute to the world in which you live.
- Your targets help you to concentrate well, to understand what is expected of you and to know how to improve your learning.
- The headteacher and governors run the school well and have helped it to improve considerably since it was last inspected. They keep a close eye on your progress and are doing all they can to improve it.

We have asked your school to help you make even better progress by:

- speeding up the work it is doing to improve your writing skills
- making sure that your work is well marked and that it provides the challenge that you clearly appreciate when teachers make you think for yourselves. We hope that, as a result of these improvements, you will make faster progress in the future and that you will continue to enjoy learning now and throughout your lives.