

Sherburn Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114127
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	295389
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Haynes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cnllr Raymond Pye
Headteacher	Miss Teresa Leggett
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
School address	Cookshold Lane Sherburn Village Durham County Durham
Telephone number	0191 3720281
Fax number	0191 372 3541

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school and pupils from Year 3 upwards are taught in mixed-age classes. Pupils are from White British backgrounds and most come from the immediate village, which is an area of economic and social disadvantage. Children have below average skills on entry to the school. An above average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities with a few having statements of special educational need. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The school has Investors in People, Healthy School and ActiveMark awards. The school was previously inspected in January 2006 and judged to require a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good, inclusive and improving school. The headteacher's sensitive and practical leadership involves staff, governors, pupils and parents in a strong partnership to make significant improvements. Since the previous inspection, they have improved pupils' achievement, standards, teaching quality, provision in the Foundation Stage and leadership so they are now good. This is underpinned by the headteacher's 'open door' management style that values individual people whatever their role in school. It leads to good relationships and commitment from everyone to work together to give of their best.

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support for pupils. Their personal development is good. They know what to do to improve their work as teachers are rigorous in tracking their progress and using the data to set them targets. Pupils take a full part in school life. They enjoy learning and know how to stay healthy through exercise and healthy eating. Behaviour is good and as one pupil commented, 'I like school; it is a very friendly place to be'. It is a strong, safe and caring community that prepares pupils well for their future as they learn necessary basic skills and the value of working and playing together.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Many are reaching the learning goals expected for their age by the time they move to Year 1. Standards have improved in the national assessments and tests at the end of each key stage and now meet the national average. This represents good progress as most pupils, including the above average number with learning difficulties, start school with below average skills. This progress is because in class lessons and small groups pupils have good teaching which meets their learning needs. However, as there are examples of outstanding and satisfactory teaching, improving the quality of all teaching to reflect best practice is a priority. The best lessons accurately meet pupils' learning needs, challenge them to think for themselves and often have imaginative presentation. The curriculum is good, but there is insufficient flexibility in the existing plans to provide enough practical work and opportunities to make realistic connections between learning in different subjects. However, there is good provision for literacy, numeracy and enrichment, including after school arts and sports clubs.

Leadership and management are good and vigorous in tackling improvement. A team approach ensures that everyone speaks with one voice about their role and how they implement the school policies and plans. This gives the school a good capacity for improvement and it provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more flexibility in the curriculum for pupils to make connections between subjects and increase opportunities for practical work
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching to reflect the best practice in each key stage to continue to improve pupils' achievement and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good teaching and individual support for children in the Reception class help them to settle quickly, gain confidence and, when they move to Year 1, many have made good progress to attain the skills expected for children of this age.

Good progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 so at the end of each stage standards in the national tests meet, and for a small number of high attaining junior pupils, exceed national averages. The school exceeded its targets in each key stage last year and its data show pupils are on course to do the same this year. This is because of the careful attention teachers give to track pupils' progress and to set them clear targets and work that meets their needs. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly in literacy and numeracy. These pupils have clear educational plans that staff use consistently to provide good tailored support. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress, to reach average or better standards from starting points well below their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Visitors and parents are quick to say that Sherburn is a 'welcoming, caring and nurturing school, where children have many incentives to learn'. Relationships are good throughout and have a positive impact on pupils' good progress. The pupils develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued, such as nomination as 'pupil of the week' and reward of 'golden tickets' when they sit at a specially set lunch table. Their behaviour is good; they are eager to talk and have enthusiastic and positive attitudes. They enjoy learning which, along with the school's best efforts, explains why attendance has risen over the past year to average. Bullying is rare but parents and pupils agree it is resolved swiftly and effectively. One parent commented, 'my child really enjoys coming to school' another said, 'relationships are excellent'.

Staff actively seek the views of pupils and give them opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as playground buddies or as members of the effective school council. Members are proud of their decisions, which benefit all pupils, such as by improving playtimes through suggesting the purchase of large toys and games. Community involvement is strong; for example, pupils recently raised a large amount of money for the National Society for the Protection of Children (NSPCC). Successful assemblies and curriculum enrichment promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and leading a healthy, active lifestyle. Physical activity has a high profile in lessons and after school clubs. These significant benefits, along with their satisfactory literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology (ICT) skills, prepare pupils well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are good overall. This is because school leadership has put in place rigorous monitoring and training, and made sure

that teachers use comprehensive data about pupils' achievement to inform lesson plans. This has sharpened the focus of lessons so pupils and teachers are clear about what they have to do to improve standards.

However, there is inconsistency with some satisfactory and outstanding teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, identified by the school's monitoring and inspection evidence.

Good and outstanding teaching across the school stems from thorough planning of work that accurately meets pupils' learning needs. Teachers are confident, have secure subject knowledge and have very good relationships with pupils. They have high expectations for all pupils to take part and gain new knowledge, which results in brisk lessons, pupils on task and enthusiasm for learning. The most effective teachers are imaginative in their approach and rigorous in challenging pupils to think for themselves, leading to good progress. There is a good balance in these lessons between class, group, paired activity and pupils working independently. These characteristics were seen, for instance, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson where 'Freddie Frog' challenged pupils in mental recall of number and multiplication facts using a number square and cards. Again, in Year 6, where the teacher acted the role of Queen Victoria telling the story of her life: pupils made notes and questioned her before progressing to writing factual accounts and looking at items of Victorian costume. This blend of imagination, use of hands-on resources, and practical activity brings learning to life. Satisfactory teaching lacks this imaginative and lively approach and provides insufficient opportunity for pupils to make links between learning in different subjects.

Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, providing extremely effective support for lower and higher attaining pupils. In lessons and in the very successful booster and group sessions, their confident, knowledgeable, and calm approach means pupils make good progress doing work that matches their learning needs. Teaching assistants are skilled at knowing when to intervene and when to allow pupils time to work independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well-balanced with good features, such as provision for Foundation Stage, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Teachers prepare differentiated work and in single and mixed-age classes which provides good progression. That said, the school's curriculum plans are under review to improve flexibility for pupils to make connections between subjects and provide more opportunities for practical work. Inspectors agree with this need.

The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is tailored effectively through in-class and booster groups to meet their needs and enable good progress. Good parallel provision is made for some low and high attaining pupils in ability sets for literacy and numeracy.

A good enrichment programme in the creative arts and sport extends learning. Numerous educational visits and visiting experts give pupils good first-hand experiences and add interest to learning. French is offered as an extra-curricular activity to Key Stage 1 children. After-school clubs such as dance, drama and football are well attended and enjoyed by boys and girls.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are highly inclusive. All staff are committed to pupils' well-being and the resulting pastoral care and support are very good, leading to pupils' good personal development and progress. They confirm that the school is a community where bullying is not tolerated; 'I like school, it is a very friendly place to be' said one pupil. Regular information is given to parents who express great confidence in the school, typically commenting 'I couldn't wish for my children to go to a better school'. A good feature is the 'open door' policy and regular opportunity for parents to see their child's class in action. These approaches typify how the headteacher and staff work together to benefit pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding, child protection and health and safety are in place. Good partnerships between the school and support agencies ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported.

The systems to collect information about pupils' progress are good. The information is used well to arrange teaching groups. Comprehensive data are analysed rigorously by the headteacher and staff to ensure pupils make good progress. For instance, learning objectives are clearly identified in pupils' books and on classroom walls. This helps pupils to see what they have to do to improve. Pupils are rightly involved in setting their targets and increasingly involved in assessing one another's work. Across the school, there is a strong culture of marking in exercise books, with consistent developmental comments to celebrate success and provide guidance and challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection, and are now good. Improvement strategies, new then, are rooted in practice and good features identified have been sustained.

The headteacher's sensitive, visionary, and practical leadership drives forward improvement. Her very good management style values the individual child and adult. This is highly successful in making sure, for instance, that staff are clear about what they have to do to raise standards and do the best for their pupils. This results in a very strong collegiate leadership and teaching team who speak with one voice. Teachers with management responsibilities for a subject or key stage carry out their roles very well. Their impact is seen in the pride that staff, governors and pupils have in the school, the rising standards, and the improved quality of learning and teaching.

A particular strength is the coherence between monitoring of teaching, assessment of pupils' work, strong self-evaluation and improvement planning. This is fundamental to the recent improvement and ensures identified actions become firmly rooted in daily practice. Self-evaluation accurately identifies areas for continued improvement and, although occasionally modest, correctly judges the school's effectiveness.

Governors provide good support and challenge, working closely with staff to make sure improvements are completed. They are clear about their role and ensure all statutory requirements are met. The issues from the previous inspection have been tackled vigorously. Clear plans and staff commitment for continued development show the school's good capacity to improve and given its prudent financial management, it provides good value for money.

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Annex A

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	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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	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?	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.

Annex A

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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherburn Village Primary School, Durham, DH6 1DU

Thank you for welcoming Mr Lowes and me to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work. You know that our visit was to see how well you learn and we agree with you and your parents that it is a good school. The good teaching you receive helps you to make good progress and enjoy learning.

You told us that Sherburn is a happy school where you look after each other, feel safe, and behave well; we agree. We thought that the headteacher and all staff work together extremely well to provide you with good facilities to help you learn and they, like you, value your work through the way you earn achievement awards.

The headteacher, staff, and governors are all keen to continue to improve your school and we hope you will work with them to do that. We have asked them to make sure that your work is interesting and helps your progress by improving the way the curriculum is planned and making sure teaching in all lessons is as good as the best so that you will continue to improve your work.

With best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Haynes (Lead inspector) and Doug Lowes (Additional inspector)