

Shevington Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106429
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309125
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Terry Holland HMI

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	144
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Foster
Headteacher	Mrs S Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Runshaw Avenue Appley Bridge Wigan Lancashire WN6 9JP
Telephone number	01257 253559
Fax number	01257 253559

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Inspection number	309125

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors for one day. The inspector investigated the following issues: the achievement of pupils and the progress they make, particularly in Key Stage 2; the impact of leadership and management, particularly on the school's awareness of the performance of pupils and the school as a whole; and pupils' personal development, well-being and their care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; and interviews with members of staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. Almost three-quarters of the parents with pupils at the school provided their views through the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. However, the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school primarily serves a residential housing estate in the 'village' of Appley Bridge on the north-western edge of Wigan Metropolitan Borough. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is below the national average. Pupils are predominantly White British with a very small number of pupils of minority ethnic heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with a statement of special educational need, are currently both in line with the average nationally, but can fluctuate year-on-year. Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with those typical for children their age.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and the ActiveMark Award. It has been awarded the Wigan Quality Standard Mark for Early Years provision. A privately provided pre-school group is located on the school premises and a thriving before and after school club operates on a daily basis. Long-term illnesses and absences have significantly affected the staffing and management of the school over the last 18 months: the deputy headteacher is currently the acting headteacher of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Shevington Vale provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. The school has a number of good features, particularly in its care of the pupils and in supporting their personal development and well-being. The school has done well to maintain these strengths, and generally high standards, despite the impact of unavoidable disruptions to staffing and some discontinuity in management in the last two years. The great majority of parents recognise the difficulties that the school has been going through and strongly support the efforts that it has made to sustain their children's education and development.

The pupils attain good standards by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, standards have been significantly above average for the last four years. Standards in reading and mathematics have been well above average and, despite a slight dip in 2007, remain so. Standards in writing have been at or above average and have been a focus for improvement for the school in the last year and a half. At Key Stage 2, the standards attained by pupils in English, mathematics and science have been well above the national average. They were still just above average in 2007, but showed a comparative decline. English results remained above average and showed a slight improvement because of the school's focus on improving writing, particularly amongst boys. Standards in mathematics remained above average but were lower than in previous years and performance in science dipped to just below average.

Given these standards, it may seem surprising that the school judges the achievement of pupils, as measured by the progress they make during their time in the school, as only satisfactory. However, its assessment is accurate. Pupils get off to a good start and make good, and in many cases very good, progress in Reception and in Key Stage 1. In recent years the achievement of pupils in Year 6 in all the core subjects has been significantly above what would normally be expected for their age, but in 2007 it dropped to being in line. In English pupils continued to make expected progress. However, in mathematics their progress dropped to being just above what is expected and it was significantly below in science. The school did not achieve its Key Stage 2 targets for mathematics and science in 2007 and the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in the national tests was below what it should be, given their earlier performance. The school's assessments also show that the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 are currently making satisfactory progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is, however, generally good, they continue to achieve above national expectations at both Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has now thoroughly analysed the evidence of achievement in 2007 and has already taken action to improve performance in science.

The school, and a number of parents, recognise the impact that the series of temporary changes in teaching staff has had on the progress that key groups of pupils have been able to make. Nonetheless, the school believes that the quality of teaching that pupils receive is good. The previous achievement of the pupils over a number of years would indicate that this has been the case, especially in the Reception class and Key Stage 1. The evidence from this inspection also confirms that the teaching by permanent members of staff, teaching their own classes, is good. It is marked by the positive working relationships that exist between teachers and pupils and high expectations of what will be achieved. Recent initiatives to enhance the stimulus for learning through use of interactive whiteboards and to reinforce the application of key skills across subjects and areas of learning are having a positive effect. Nevertheless, given the evidence of achievement, and the impact that temporary teaching has had on the learning of

pupils in a number of classes, the quality of teaching overall and its impact on learning is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. It is well supported by the good curriculum and range of extra-curricular opportunities that the school provides. As a result, pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is well balanced and their creative development is enhanced. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school and act very responsibly. School councillors, speaking on behalf of all pupils, were very clear that they enjoy school and nine out of ten of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed. This is reflected in pupils' attendance, which is consistently above average. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy. They spoke enthusiastically about what they and staff have achieved together to promote healthier eating and healthy lifestyles through physical education and sporting opportunities.

Pupils generally feel safe and well cared for in school and, again, the great majority of parents agree. Overall, behaviour is good. However, a small minority of pupils and parents did express the wish that, when bullying does occur, all staff dealt with it more robustly. The pupils take good advantage of the opportunities they have to make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community, including helping each other and charitable organisations. The school supports the children's preparation for their future lives well. Pupils leave with sound and often good standards in literacy and numeracy as well as important basic skills, such as computer skills. The school's enhancement of the curriculum to widen opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work, and to meet and work with adults from the worlds of sport and the arts also plays a significant role.

The care, guidance and support that the school provides for its pupils are satisfactory. The care and support it gives pupils are good. Permanent staff know the children well and they work closely together to ensure they maintain a good overview of all the children's pastoral needs. All the required procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. The enhanced role of the special educational needs coordinator has also ensured that good links have been maintained with all the necessary support services and external agencies in order to meet the needs of pupils, including those with particular educational or social needs. However, whilst the levels of achievement in the past show that experienced staff have had a sound grasp of the academic needs of pupils, the changes and disruptions to staffing in recent years has had an effect on the academic guidance that pupils have received. The school has not been able to develop the robust systems for monitoring the performance of pupils, setting them individual targets for achievement and evaluating their progress towards those targets as intended. Whilst this is now being addressed, it has meant that the guidance to pupils on what they should be achieving and on their expected progress has not been sufficiently rigorous, as reflected in recent results and overall performance.

The school recognises that it is leadership and management that has been most affected by the staffing disruptions in the last two years. The interim arrangements that have had to be put in place have significantly affected continuity in senior management. In that same period, problems were compounded by major changes in the make-up and leadership of the governing body. As a result, some key developments recommended by the last inspection, notably in strengthening monitoring and evaluation of performance, and the ability of middle managers and subject coordinators to take greater responsibility for this role, have not been able to be taken forward fully.

The situation has improved recently. The deputy headteacher, appointed in April 2007 and recently confirmed as the acting headteacher, has been able to provide continuity of management and is providing very good leadership. This is building on the good team working by experienced staff. The school is now putting in place more robust systems for monitoring performance and setting appropriate targets for individual pupils and the school as a whole. A programme of supporting coordinators in monitoring the delivery of their subject areas across the school is in place. The introduction of the key skills programme is also providing a basis for the systematic assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in other subjects of the curriculum. The governing body is also now under firm and experienced leadership. It is reconstituting its committee structure and is now able to properly support and challenge the school. This is particularly evident in the school's own evaluation of its performance, produced in conjunction with the governing body. This reflects very rigorous and perceptive assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school and demonstrates a firm grasp of what needs to be done. These developments, together with the continuity of leadership, greater stability in staffing, the impending return of other experienced teachers and the additional support being provided by the local authority, mean that the school now has good capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision for the Foundation Stage is good. It is well led and managed and its work forms the bedrock for the rest of the school. Good teaching and learning and a strong focus on structured play and practical first hand experience enables the children to make good progress and reach standards that are above average in all areas of learning. A reduction in the number of children on roll this academic year has meant that the children in Reception are being taught with some younger Year 1 pupils, but very comprehensive planning, assessment and tracking are ensuring that they are still making good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the initiatives to improve the monitoring and evaluation of performance are sustained and are fully embedded, so that challenging but realistic targets continue to be set for pupils and the school as a whole; pupils' progress towards those targets is checked regularly; and any underachievement by pupils of all abilities, including the most able, is quickly identified.
- Consolidate recent developments in supporting coordinators to monitor the delivery of their subjects across the school; and explore good practice in similar schools to ensure this can be sustained.
- Ensure procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are robust, rigorous and regularly implemented.
- Work with the school council to ensure that the school's code of conduct reflects procedures that pupils agree deal fairly but firmly with any unacceptable behaviour.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Inspection of Shevington Vale Primary School, Wigan, WN6 9JP

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I promised the school council that I would write to them so that they, and your teachers, can let you know what I thought about the school. A large number of your parents also completed a questionnaire to give me their views about the school. This was most helpful, so please thank them for me.

I really enjoyed being in your school. I think Shevington Vale really cares about you and works hard to help each one of you to achieve your full potential. You know that the school has had to deal with lots of changes of staff recently. For some of you that has meant quite a lot of temporary teachers, but all the staff have done their best to make sure that this has had as little impact as possible on your education and your enjoyment of school. And you do enjoy school, both you and your parents told me so! You showed me this on the day I visited. The weather was horrible and you did not get any play-time outside at all, but the school was 'buzzing' with activity and you all behaved really well and acted so responsibly. Well done!

I also agree with you about the extra opportunities the school gives you to develop your interests and to keep fit and healthy. Working with artists and sports people must be fun and I really liked the display of the work some of you produced during your last Arts week - I really felt like I was in a jungle!

All the changes, though they were not the fault of the school, have had some effect. Last year, the standards and the progress that pupils who were in Year 6 made, were not as good as in the past. The progress that some of you are now making also is not as good as it might be. However, Mrs Robinson and the staff have started to put that right.

I have asked them to continue to work on their new ways of making sure that you are all making the very best progress that you are capable of. I have also asked Mrs Robinson to work with you as the school council to make sure that together you agree ways that the occasional bullying is dealt with.

I know you will all play your part in helping the school to get back on track. The staff are very committed to making your school a special place and they are always trying to improve further. I wish you all the very best wishes for the future.