

Shortbrook Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107102
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309314
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Bromley
Headteacher	Mrs J Alexander
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Westfield Northway Westfield Sheffield South Yorkshire S20 8FB
Telephone number	0114 2482497
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated in the centre of a large estate which presents the school with some very challenging circumstances in which to operate. It is smaller than average. The school occupies the premises of a former first and middle school built to accommodate 650 pupils. Numbers have continued to fall since the previous inspection and it is anticipated that this trend is set to continue. About 5% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but only a very small number speak English as an additional language. There are a small number of children from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. Movement of pupils in and out of the school during term time is much higher than in other similar schools. The school has a Healthy School award and Eco award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is serving its local community effectively. It provides good value for money. The commitment and dedication of the headteacher and deputy headteacher cannot be faulted. It is a credit to them both that the falling school roll and its impact on finances and resources has been managed so well and that the high morale of staff has been maintained. The raised targets for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reflect their efforts to improve standards despite the many difficulties the school currently faces.

The school makes good provision in the Foundation Stage, enabling children to get off to a good start to their learning. In the infant and junior sections, small year groups, some with half of all pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the high movement of pupils in and out of the school during term time are factors that distort the overall performance of the school.

By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving but are still below average. Few pupils attain above average standards but the proportion attaining the level expected is improving. By Year 6, standards in science are above average and this reflects how well the subject is taught. Overall, pupils make good progress because of their willingness to learn and the consistently good quality of teaching they receive. Recent initiatives to raise standards in writing and mathematics are proving to be effective, especially for pupils who find learning difficult. These pupils make good progress as they benefit from the small numbers in each class, the support of skilled teaching assistants and tasks that are carefully planned to meet their specific needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils are polite and respectful. They show a good understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and most pupils now have a positive attitude towards their work. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying.

Teachers plan work carefully to meet the different needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. All staff use information and communications technology (ICT) effectively to enhance pupils' learning. The curriculum is good. Standards are improving because recent changes to the curriculum have given pupils more opportunities to improve their writing skills. The number of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs is remarkable given the small size of the school and number of staff. These extend the school day and help raise pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence as well teaching them new skills.

Parents' views of the school are positive. They appreciate the excellent level of care and support their children receive. The outstanding support the learning mentor provides for pupils and their parents is a major factor in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and are in the right frame of mind to learn. Staff know their pupils well and set challenging individual targets for them in English and mathematics. Most pupils know precisely what is expected of them and are beginning to assess their own progress towards meeting their individual targets. This helps them to understand what they need to learn. The caring support and clear guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a major factor enabling them to make the same good progress as other pupils.

Leadership and management are good. All staff carefully check pupils' progress and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teaching by observing one another's lessons. Governors are very

supportive and keen to help to evaluate school performance in order to bring about further improvement. However, they recognise that they are still in the early stages of developing this aspect of their work. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills that are generally well below those expected for their age. Communication skills are particularly weak for many. The good provision ensures that children get off to a flying start and make good progress. In the Nursery and Reception unit there is an incredible amount of space available both indoors and outside for the relatively small number on roll. This space is extremely well managed by the Foundation Stage leader with both age groups having their own designated areas. For example, they often share the 'garden maker centre' and the outdoor classroom. This integration of older and younger children has a major impact on their personal, social and emotional development. The individual attention staff can give, because of the small numbers, ensures that children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Children's progress is better still in aspects of their personal development with almost all attaining the goals set for them.

Staff work effectively as a team to plan an exciting and interesting curriculum appropriate to each child's specific needs. Children in the Nursery find it hard to sit and listen at the start of the session, needing to burn off some of their energy. The teaching assistants manage this well. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed a dance session, acting out the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. In Reception, tasks are sufficiently challenging to hold children's interest. All enjoy playing word games with their teacher, using the computer to listen to stories or making a home for Teddy from construction blocks. The high quality of the creative curriculum results in some excellent artwork such as willow pattern plates and the 'pig in the pond' display.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, particularly in writing, and in mathematics

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the 2007 Year 2 teacher assessments, standards were significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls did much better than boys. In the Year 6, national tests, overall standards were below average in English and mathematics but above average in science. Relatively few pupils achieved higher levels in Year 2 or Year 6.

Overall, standards remain well below average in the current Year 2, largely because of the very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the school's data clearly shows boys as well as girls making good progress from their starting points.

In Year 6 the above average standards in science have been maintained. Pupils benefit from very good quality of teaching and from the many opportunities provided for them to investigate scientific problems. The recently introduced strategies to raise standards in writing and mathematics are working. Currently, standards are average for both subjects. Detailed assessment data clearly shows that all pupils are making good progress as they move through the school. The proportion attaining above average standards is increasing at Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

'Teachers really like us' is a view widely held by pupils and reflects the commitment of staff to care for and encourage their pupils, reflecting the school's motto of 'caring and sharing'. There is a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere and pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their attendance which is in line with that of other schools.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are keen to do well. Year 6 pupils often arrive before school starts to finish their homework or to work on mathematics programmes in the computer suite, in order to help them meet their challenging targets. The healthy food served at the breakfast club is popular with pupils, parents and staff. Pupils have a good understanding of a healthy diet and the Healthy School award endorses this.

The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. All follow their agreed codes of conduct in each class and relationships between pupils are good. Most have a good knowledge of other cultures, for example Indian, Chinese or African. However, their knowledge of world religions is less secure. Members of the school council take their duties seriously and are proud of their achievements, such as providing more play equipment at lunchtime. Their improving literacy and numeracy skills are helping to prepare pupils better for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff are conscientious and work very effectively as a team to ensure that their teaching meets pupils' needs and raises standards. Warm relationships with pupils are a strong feature in all classes. For example, they successfully promote pupils' willingness to learn and provide vulnerable pupils, or those finding learning difficult, with the self-esteem and confidence they need to make progress. Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting individuals or groups of pupils in class. Teaching assistants' devotion and expertise enhance learning, enabling the pupils they support to achieve well. Teachers maintain a good pace in lessons, match tasks carefully to the different ages and abilities in each class and effectively use ICT to support learning. On a few occasions, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to answer questions at length or to reflect on their learning at the end of lessons. Pupils' attainment and progress are rigorously assessed on a regular basis. Teachers make good use of the information to plan future work for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this in part is because of the good curriculum provided for them. The science curriculum is particularly well planned and this ensures that high standards are maintained. Pupils enjoy activities such as identifying different habitats in the school grounds or experimenting to change the colour of white carnations by placing them in coloured dye. The recent implementation of the latest national guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy is beginning to enrich the curriculum further and to raise standards in English and mathematics. Pupils' ICT skills are enhanced as a result of having their own computer when they work in the spacious and well equipped computer suite.

The recently introduced programme to promote pupils' social and emotional development, together with the teaching of French, further support the pupils' personal and cultural development. All pupils thoroughly enjoy the two residential visits they experience. There is a very wide range of well supported clubs provided before and after school and at lunchtime. It is a credit to the small number of staff that there are so many clubs for pupils to enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All the adults who work with pupils ensure that each and every one is provided with an outstanding level of care, support and guidance. The success of their collective efforts enables all pupils to feel valued and to enjoy school.

Safeguarding arrangements are well established and pupils say that there is no bullying and they feel safe. They know they can talk to any adult about problems they may experience because of the strong relationships between themselves and staff. This feeling of security has a positive impact on the good quality of learning. A wide range of outside agencies is used exceptionally well to support individual pupils and their families further. Rigorous checks on pupils' attendance have resulted in a steady improvement in the number of pupils who regularly come to school. This is a good achievement given the context of the school and the high mobility of pupils.

The great majority of parents are happy with the care and support for their children. 'Small school with a big heart' was a typical comment from parents. Systems to track pupils' progress are well established and effective in identifying any pupils who are not meeting their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher is key to maintaining good quality provision and rising standards. The interior of the school is well maintained, bright and colourful, with pupils' work vibrantly displayed. Pupils regard school as their safe haven, which is a credit to all staff. 'Everyone smiles' is the feeling of pupils and this helps keep morale high.

The management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a strength. Extra care is taken to ensure that the particular needs of the few who speak English as an additional language and the small number of children from Traveller families are fully met.

Staff know their school well and their evaluations of its strengths are predominantly accurate. The appropriate areas for development have been identified, but how the school will judge whether these improvements have been achieved is less clear. Good procedures are in place to check performance.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors' good attendance at meetings shows their loyalty and determination to help the school to improve. Over half are newly appointed and they are actively encouraged to visit as often as possible. Procedures to involve governors in checking the school's effectiveness are still being developed.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	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?	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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Shortbrook Community Primary School, Sheffield, S20 8FB

I really enjoyed my two days with you. There is a tremendous atmosphere in your school. It was good to see everyone getting on with one another and behaving so well in lessons and around school. Your school is giving you a good education.

In the Nursery and Reception unit, children are very lucky to have so much space to play outdoors, painting and building a home for Teddy. I thought some of your pictures such as the red buses and 'pig in the pond' were fantastic. It was good to see you using your computers so well. Your teachers work very hard to plan really interesting work for you. Those of you who find learning a bit harder have just the help you need from your teachers and their helpers. This makes sure that you enjoy learning and do well. I have asked all your teachers to make sure that they always give you work that makes you concentrate and think hard in English and mathematics. Year 6 were trying really hard to become better at mathematics by working on their computer programs before school even started. Well done and keep it up!

The target for you all is to try and do as well in English and mathematics as you do in science. You can help with this by always trying your hardest. I really enjoyed seeing you investigate habitats. You managed to find some unusual ones as you walked around the garden area. I hope the experiment to change the colour of the carnations worked! You told me that you like your after-school activities. I am amazed how many there are considering how small your school is. The school takes very special care of you all and is quick to support you if you need help. I saw how challenging your targets are and it was really good that you keep checking your own work to see how well you are doing.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are leading the school well and staff are all working hard to help you do better. I hope that you will carry on enjoying school and try to make your good school even better.