

Shardlow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112618
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310950
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judie Anderson
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002
School address	London Road Shardlow Derby DE72 2GR
Telephone number	01332 792215
Fax number	01332 792215

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who was in the school for one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following areas were inspected in detail: the progress pupils make at each stage of the school; why standards in English appear to be below those in mathematics at the end of Year 6; and the impact of different aspects of the curriculum, care & guidance and leadership and management. Teaching, learning and pupils' personal development were also inspected. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils, parental questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents.

Description of the school

This primary school is smaller than most. Pupils are taught in one of three mixed-age classes. Attainment on entry to Reception is typical for children of this age. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is below average. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is similar to most schools. Very few pupils come from backgrounds other than White British and all pupils speak English as their first language. Awards achieved by the school include Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School Status and the FA Charter Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in this outstanding school. Not only do they achieve standards that are well above average by the time they reach the end of Year 6, but also their personal development is excellent.

Parents are delighted by what the school does for their children and the level of care shown. 'Shardlow is an exceptional school. It has an open and honest approach to both children and their parents.' 'My child always receives one hundred percent support.' 'Shardlow has given my child an excellent start to his education. He has come on in leaps and bounds since starting.' 'Since starting last September, my child has progressed with amazing speed.' These are just a few of the comments parents included on the questionnaires.

Pupils agree that they enjoy school a great deal and this shows in their attendance, which is well above average. They find lessons interesting, challenging, and are fully involved, showing high levels of sustained concentration. Consequently, their academic achievement is outstanding. Excellent progress is made from the very moment they start school. By the end of the Reception Year, children generally surpass the levels reached by most children of this age. Outstanding progress continues through the rest of the school and standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. High-level core skills, such as reading and writing, are evident in other subjects, particularly in their topic work. Standards in art, music, design and technology are high when compared to those nationally expected for this age. The school is justifiably proud of its impressive sporting achievement, considering that it is such a small school. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next stages of their education because care, guidance and support are outstanding.

A strong feature of the school is its exceptional ethos of care and high expectation. Pupils feel very safe in school and say that they are free from any form of threatening behaviour whilst in school. 'There's no bullying here,' commented one pupil. Behaviour in class, around the school and during break times is excellent. Pupils have excellent opportunities to support the school and adults place a great deal of trust in them. They repay this by performing duties such as school council members, running lunchtime sports clubs and as school liaison officers, who represent the school in some of its dealings with the community. They do this in a reliable and very efficient manner. They contribute to the wider community extremely well, through entertaining people in local residential homes, for example.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent and staff work extremely well as a unified team under the exceptionally strong leadership of the headteacher. Governors play an important part in this team and their support and challenge are of high value in contributing to school development. All teachers carry additional responsibilities and have strived together to make the school as good as it is, paying great attention to detail. They have taken the challenges facing small schools and turned them into strengths. Classes are mixed age and some have pupils from different key stages. The curriculum is excellent. Planning is careful and detailed so that skills, knowledge and understanding develop progressively for all pupils as they move through the school. Pupils find the learning opportunities interesting and topics bring together a number of subjects so they can easily see links and recognise the relevance of learning. Curriculum enrichment is excellent and all pupils have opportunities to reach their potential. Those who find learning difficult receive very effective support so they make excellent progress too. The school provides opportunities for those pupils who excel in some areas, either

through its own resources or through its excellent links with other schools and the community. Teachers monitor carefully the progress through the school of each pupil. The headteacher has developed robust systems to track pupils' progress. These help identify those, who for a variety of reasons, may not be performing as well as they should. Support is arranged quickly so they are soon back on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. This information is also analysed to identify whole school issues and take any remedial action needed. A typical example is the introduction of strategies to improve reading skills throughout the school so that standards in English match those in mathematics and science.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Only good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection, and that which was good, had areas of excellence. Lesson planning is very effective in challenging pupils at all ages and abilities in the mixed-age classes. Teachers know pupils very well and pitch work very closely to individual needs. Relationships are of high quality and teachers value highly what pupils have to say and promote a 'have a go' culture. This helps pupils become very confident learners. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well in partnership. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' progress. They are skilled, well organised and know pupils well. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and specialist teaching in subjects such as religious education, music, information and communication technology and aspects of physical education add further quality to the provision in these subjects. Pupils receive very good information about their own progress and talk confidently about how well they are doing in their work. However, the marking of pupils work does not always sufficiently inform them of what exactly they may be doing wrong or how they could improve the quality of their work.

The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection and has met all the areas identified for improvement. High quality leadership and management; accurate school self-evaluation; actions to identify weaknesses and quickly address them so they become strengths and the high quality of education provided mean the school has an excellent capacity to improve even more.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Excellent provision in Reception means that children make outstanding progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Shared activities with Year 1, such as introductions to lessons, mean that these young children experience a high level of discussion and vocabulary, which helps develop their communication skills and confidence extremely well. There is an excellent balance between teacher directed activities and those that children choose for themselves. This means there are many opportunities for them to learn both in structured and less formal situations. Their learning experiences are monitored very carefully to ensure all children experience a balance across all areas of learning. Assessment is thorough and helps build a comprehensive profile of each child's learning. Adults work extremely well as a team, with teaching assistants being very effectively deployed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that the quality of the marking of pupils' work is consistent across the school and in different subjects so that it clearly informs pupils of strengths and weaknesses in their work and tells them clearly how to improve its quality.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shardlow Primary School, Shardlow, DE72 2GR

I very much enjoyed the day I spent in your school recently and would like to thank you all for making me so welcome. It was a short time but, with your help, I found out a lot about your school and what I saw really impressed me. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting you in lessons, watching you work, speaking to you about your school and finding out about how you help to make the school so successful.

You go to an excellent school. All the adults working in your school, under the excellent leadership of your headteacher, make a very strong team. They work really well to provide you with a high quality education. Teaching and the quality of care that adults show for you are excellent. You make a very important contribution by behaving excellently, taking responsibility very seriously and trying hard to do your very best. As a result, you all make excellent progress in your lessons and reach very high standards in your work. You are also very well prepared to go on to the next stages of your education. I was very impressed by the high quality relationships in school. You are all excellent at being friends with others and caring about each other. Your actions help others feel safe in school and as a result, you say you enjoy being there. Those of you I spoke to enjoy school very much. Your parents are very happy with how the school cares for you and how well you are progressing.

One of the reasons your school is so good is because the headteacher, staff and governors identify weaknesses and quickly do something about them. Consequently, there is very little that needs improving. I am asking staff to make sure that, when marking your work, they indicate what you do well, what you may have done wrong and how you can improve its quality.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector