

# Shield Row Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114194
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311510
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steve Carr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Knighton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	King Edward VIII Terrace Shield Row Stanley County Durham DH9 0HQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 239661
<b>Fax number</b>	01207 234424

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an urban area with some social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils come from White British families; none has English as their second language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There has been an entirely new senior management team within the past two years and most staff have been recently appointed.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has experienced an unsettled period in the last two years, with major changes and some instability in staffing. Inevitably, it has taken some time for new procedures to be established so that staff work cohesively and in turn the school is showing signs of improvement. The determination and clear-sightedness of the headteacher have enabled him to support staff well, introduce initiatives such as the progress tracking system and enhance the quality of the learning environment.

Pupils start school with average standards and leave school with average standards; this represents satisfactory achievement by all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards dipped in Year 2 in 2007, but there were compelling reasons for this. A programme to address comparative weaknesses in writing is having a beneficial impact. Standards this year are on course to be average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good practice, especially in Key Stage 2. Typically in classrooms, there is a positive atmosphere, good organisation and clarity about what pupils need to learn. The good rapport between staff and pupils ensures that pupils are keen to learn and behave well in lessons. However, teachers do not make the best use of their assessment of pupils to match work skilfully to the individual needs of pupils, and to provide work that is always challenging enough. In addition, the learning in some lessons is constrained by a modest pace. The curriculum is satisfactory and has some good enrichment, but not regularly enough. Teachers do not bring learning alive enough in lessons nor maximise opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and get on well together, in response to the school's good mantle of care. 'A happy, caring school,' was a typical comment by parents who praise the approachability of staff. All adults are good role models, so pupils become considerate and courteous, and understand how their actions influence others. They know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle but do not yet have the self-discipline to opt for healthy food when possible. Like most children, they enjoy physical exercise. Links with the wider world strengthen their cultural development, but the school does not promote their spiritual development enough. Attendance is satisfactory but beginning to decline. Although illness has been a factor this year, the school's systems for promoting attendance are not as rigorous as they might be.

The leadership of the school is satisfactory at all levels, including governance. The school is heading in the right direction because self-evaluation is mostly accurate. However, it is neither robust enough in its own appraisals nor insistent enough that things improve quickly, and so its progress lacks real impetus; its provision is currently similar to that seen at the last inspection. It has satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The Reception class gives children a satisfactory start to their education. They enter the class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, except in language development which is below average. Satisfactory teaching and curriculum enable children to make satisfactory progress through the year and reach levels expected of five year olds. Language development lags slightly behind other areas of learning. Children respond well in a caring environment; they

play and work together happily and enjoy the various activities in and out of the classroom. The school is aware that their learning is limited by the lack of outside learning area and has already made it a high priority.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the level of challenge in lessons is consistently high enough and meets the needs of all pupils.
- Increase the rigour in the school's monitoring and in assessing subsequent actions.
- Develop a more creative curriculum.
- Increase attendance.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupil's achievement is satisfactory and standards are average throughout the school. Their starting points in Year 1 are average, although language skills are slightly lower than expected levels. Standards by the end of Year 2 tend to be average but dipped to below average in 2007, especially in reading and writing. This was due to some instability in teaching and the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. With more settled teaching, pupils in the current Year 2 are on track to reach average standards and are making satisfactory progress.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are usually average in English, mathematics and science; inspection evidence suggests that this is likely to be repeated this year. This represents satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. The school is aware that not quite enough pupils reach the higher levels at Years 2 and 6, and is introducing measures to help overcome this. Apart from this, all pupils achieve equally, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils work and play together well. They are considerate and mostly behave well around school and in lessons. Pupils say that occasionally there is inappropriate behaviour but they know who to turn to for help. This includes fellow pupils who are trained to support them, and issues are soon resolved. As a result, they feel safe. They are aware of the need to exercise and eat healthily although they do not always make healthy choices at lunchtime.

Pupils have a good attitude to learning and maintain their concentration even when their work is not especially challenging or stimulating. They make a positive contribution to the school community through the work of the school council, the way they are trained to help one another and the running of the school fruit shop. They regularly raise money for charity and are aware of different cultures, notably through their links with Africa and Turkey. The development of workplace skills is satisfactory; pupils are still developing the skills necessary to work on their own initiative. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good teaching, especially in Key Stage 2. In all lessons, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and relationships are positive and supportive. In good lessons, there is a range of interesting activities, including drama, which motivate pupils to work and to investigate together. Teachers ask probing questions to ascertain what pupils know and to extend their thinking. In less successful, though nonetheless satisfactory, lessons teachers' planning is not skilful enough to ensure a brisk pace of learning and provide adequate scope for pupils to develop their understanding or feedback their ideas.

The marking and assessment of pupils' work are used to plan what will be taught but not rigorously enough to result in work that is consistently challenging for all groups of pupils. Although interactive whiteboards are developing as a teaching aid, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use them or other computers to enhance their learning. Teaching assistants are well used to support pupils in group and independent work but are employed less purposefully when there is whole class teaching.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school follows the guidelines of nationally accepted schemes of work, so pupils learn progressively and systematically in all subjects. Increasingly, the school is diversifying the curriculum through special themed activities, such as the African week. The school does not yet do enough to ensure that lessons are routinely stimulating and rich in opportunities to develop basic skills through other subjects and to put learning in context.

A good personal, social and health education programme promotes pupils' emotional development and raises awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Individual learning plans are detailed and pertinent but support in lessons is varied. A well stocked library, a new computer room and bright, spacious classrooms create a positive learning environment. The school has yet to develop the grounds as a learning resource, and is hampered by issues of public access.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Parents rightly praise the good quality of care and support for their children. 'All staff are readily available to help,' said one, echoing others' views. All adults know the pupils well and are aware of their needs and how to meet them. Support for vulnerable students is both sensitive and effective, helped by good relationships with many outside agencies. All necessary child protection and safeguarding requirements are met. Close links with the local child care providers and secondary schools ensure pupils are ready for their new school. The school is aware that the attendance of some pupils is a concern but has not yet adopted a rigorous enough approach to tackle the problem.

Reports for parents are clear and informative about pupils' progress and set targets for improvement. The good systems for monitoring pupils' progress, used by teachers to support

pupils' learning, have not yet had the necessary impact on ensuring all lessons are challenging enough to raise standards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has done well to ensure that the school is beginning to improve. He has spearheaded a programme of much needed refurbishment to the classrooms, established a new library and computer room, and introduced a good system for checking pupils' progress. Other priorities, relevant to the school's needs, are not streamlined enough to assure good progress in all of them, but are satisfactory.

The headteacher and senior staff monitor the work of the school on a regular basis, and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This monitoring is not sufficiently balanced and hard-edged to, for example, show teachers how they can improve. The same is true of governance. Governors are very supportive and work hard for the school. They have no formal programme of double-checking the progress of the school and do not hold the school to account with sufficient rigour. Nevertheless, given the shared will and commitment of staff and with standards back on track, the school has the capacity to become better in time.

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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?	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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	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**

21 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shield Row Primary School, Durham, DH9 0HQ

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school, and to tell you what we thought of your school. It was important for us to hear your opinions and those of your parents. Please pass on our thanks to them for sending back their questionnaires.

Your school is satisfactory with some good features. We think that you all develop well as individuals. Your behaviour around school and attitudes to work are good, and clearly help you to learn. You look after one another well, and the school takes good care of you, so everyone feels safe and valued. You increasingly lead a healthy lifestyle although some of you find it hard to choose the foods that are best for you. We like the way you learn about the modern world through your links with Ghana and Turkey. For some of you, your attendance is not as good as it could be and we hope that you will try harder to come to school as often as possible.

You make satisfactory progress in your work. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average for your age. They could be higher and we have asked your school to make sure that all your work is always just right for you – challenging but not too hard. We saw some good things in lessons and you have exciting activities, like the African week. We feel that more interesting lessons will inspire you to work even harder and improve your literacy and numeracy skills. We hope you will agree.

Your headteacher and all staff want the best for you. They have already introduced some good things, such as the fresh new classrooms. They have plenty of other ideas but school needs to be careful in judging the way it operates, so that it is absolutely sure it is doing the right things for you.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector