

Shepherd Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117096
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312487
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Yvonne Ryan
Headteacher	Ms Linda Cannon
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
School address	Shepherd's Lane Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 8JJ
Telephone number	01923 773478
Fax number	01923 444740

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shepherd Primary School is a little smaller than many other primary schools. It is situated near the centre of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire. The socio-economic circumstances of the catchment area are mixed. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils start at the school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are in line with those expected nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are similar to the national average. The school has gained Investors in People, the Healthy Schools Award and the Active Sports Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Shepherd Primary is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Pupils' achievement and personal development are good and significantly improving in the school. The headteacher provides dynamic and committed leadership so that there is a clear vision for continuous improvement. The reputation of the school is growing in the town and parents speak highly of the school and the support for their children. One parent wrote, 'There is an excellent nurturing environment and both my children are very happy at the school and have grown in confidence.' Parents praise the improved facilities in the school and the dedication of the teachers.

Pupils make good progress and leave the school with attainment above the national average. Targeted support for pupils who require additional help and the emphasis on literacy development are raising standards across the school. The challenge now is to raise further the attainment of all pupils, particularly the more able, in English and mathematics. The very high standard of care and guidance is greatly supporting the general improvements in the school. The majority of pupils behave well and act as good representatives of the school. Attendance and punctuality are now good due to supportive monitoring by the school. Pupils enjoy their time at school and develop into positive and friendly individuals.

The school has excellent partnerships with the local community and schools, including the school-based Children's Centre and the Little Shepherd Day Nursery. Good use is made of assessment information to track pupils' progress and identify underachievement. Teaching is generally good although the school recognises the need to develop the overall quality of teaching and learning in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons. Curricular provision is good with a wide variety of enrichment experiences. Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is accurate so that the headteacher and governors are aware of the areas for development. The school manages the budget creatively leading to impressive improvements in the physical environment. Shepherd Primary School has made good progress in its improvements since its previous inspection and has good capacity to improve even further as it moves towards the next stage of its development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides pupils with a very good start to their education and contributes much to ensuring that they develop basic skills. The curriculum covers all areas of learning, with many opportunities to develop imaginative and structured play, both in and out of the classroom. There is a strong emphasis on teaching language, communication, social and problem-solving skills so that pupils make good progress. Assessment is thorough and accurate so that there are effective systems for tracking pupils' progress. Relationships are excellent and pupils settle quickly and happily. Parents are rightly pleased with the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further across the school, particularly for the more-able pupils, in English and mathematics.
- Develop the quality of teaching and learning further in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils enter the school with average levels of knowledge and skills. By the time they leave, standards are above average, which represents good progress. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Few pupils fail to reach the expected Level 2. The school has been increasingly successful in improving the standards of writing through focused work on speaking and listening.

From Years 3 to 6, all pupils achieve well. National test results in English, mathematics and science are above average. A very large majority of pupils gain at least Level 4 in the three core subjects. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that they, too, make good progress. The school rightly identifies raising attainment in reading and writing for all pupils of above average ability, and in mathematics and science for the more able girls, as key areas for further improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. The school is a friendly and safe environment in which pupils show respect towards each other and the staff. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school and there are clear systems for dealing with incidents of misbehaviour. Most pupils are very positive about their learning and school. Attendance of pupils is now above average and demonstrates a significant improvement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are sensitive of others' feelings and appreciate the world around them. Pupils have time for reflection in assemblies. They develop a very good understanding of the wide range of cultures both within their own community and in the wider world. Pupils are increasingly adopting healthy lifestyles and taking part in a wide range of sporting activities. They raise money through the house system for a variety of charities. Older pupils willingly take on responsibility within the school such as organising activities in the playground for the younger pupils. Pupils appreciate the chance to share their ideas for improvement through the school council and are presently involved in the development of the play areas. Through the learning of basic skills and the good opportunities they have to work together, pupils are prepared very well for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff work hard to ensure that most teaching is good. Where teaching is less effective it is because inexperienced staff have not yet fully developed their teaching techniques. The school mostly identifies and shares good practice but this best practice needs to be fully integrated. There are very positive relationships between teachers and pupils in lessons which support learning. Behaviour is generally good because staff manage pupils well. However, not all pupils are good listeners and this slows the pace of the learning in some lessons. Teachers use assessment information to help in planning lessons and meeting the learning needs of individual pupils. Regular assessment is mostly accurate so that planning is good and offers both support and challenge to pupils of all abilities. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and share this with them. Pupils are increasingly involved in their own learning through

opportunities to assess how well they think they are doing. There is good support for learning through effective use of resources, including interactive whiteboards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are integrated closely throughout the curriculum. As a result, the school is well placed to introduce its new 'creative curriculum'. The particularly strong emphasis placed on personal, social and health education meets the needs of pupils well and makes a significant contribution to their personal development and well-being. Themed weeks, workshops, visits and visitors to the school greatly enrich the curriculum. Pupils value highly the wide range of additional activities at the school. The curriculum includes a wide range of multi-cultural activities. Excellent display work in the classrooms and corridors provides a stimulating environment for learning. The breadth of extra curricular provision supports pupils well and adds considerable enjoyment to their school experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral side of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Consequently, pupils feel well looked after and safe. Provision for the wide range of additional needs of many pupils is very effective. The extended provision through the newly opened Children's Centre is ensuring full care and support for vulnerable groups. Liaison between the head of the centre, the Nursery and the main school is developing well and this prepares pupils very well for school. Individual needs are identified early and additional sessions help pupils fill gaps in their learning of basic skills. The quality of support in lessons is generally good, although teachers do not fully use support staff at all times. Excellent systems exist for ensuring pupils' protection and safety in all aspects of school life. Academic guidance and support is good. Tracking of pupils' progress is well established and pupils are aware of their learning targets. Marking is positive and mostly related to learning objectives. However, it is not consistent across the school and does not always explain exactly what pupils have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, with a clear strategic vision for improvement in the school. Parents, teachers and governors greatly respect and share her focused approach and commitment to promoting good standards of behaviour, enjoyment in learning, high levels of care and attainment for all pupils. The deputy headteacher provides high quality support and acts as a catalyst for development across the school.

Staff are fully involved in discussing strategies for improvement. The school improvement plan is a detailed document with clear success criteria and monitoring arrangements. The leaders of the key stages and subjects are developing their roles very well so that they are now taking a greater part in the planning and monitoring processes. As a result, self-evaluation is both accurate and effective. The school is also effective in recruiting staff and there is a good

programme of professional development. The school runs very smoothly and calmly on a day to day basis.

Governance is good. Governors monitor progress well and are individually linked to specific subject areas. The school has addressed all the issues raised in the last inspection report.

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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	2
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	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 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	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

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Shepherd Primary School, Rickmansworth, WD3 8JJ

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you in the assemblies and during playtime. We know that your parents and carers are very pleased with the improvements in the school. This letter is to tell you what we think of your school.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- you try hard and make good progress in your work
- you feel safe and very happy at school
- you behave well and take care of one another
- you understand the importance of being healthy
- your attendance at school is very good
- the teachers and support staff greatly care for you
- there are many after-school activities
- the school is tidy and the classrooms are very attractive
- there are lots of opportunities to take on responsibility
- you are well prepared for secondary school
- you have a very good headteacher.

We have asked all the staff and the governors to do the following things to make the school even better:

- help all the pupils to gain even better results in English and mathematics
- encourage teachers to share their ideas so that all teaching and learning is very good.

Keep working hard and enjoying the many things you do at Shepherd Primary School. You are very lucky to be in such a good school. We would like to wish you success in your future education.

With very best wishes

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector