

Sheredes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117353
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312582
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynlea Holden
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Childs
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2003
School address	Benford Road Hoddesdon Hertfordshire EN11 8LL
Telephone number	01992 465154
Fax number	01992 464151

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspection focused on the following.

- How the school is seeking to improve achievement in writing, particularly for boys.
- How the school assesses children's skills and experiences when they enter the Nursery and Reception, and the progress they make by the start of Year 1.
- How well pupils develop and use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Sheredes is larger than most primary schools. It is greatly oversubscribed and new building work is being completed so that pupil numbers can increase further. It has an attached nursery. Children attend the nursery part-time. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low and relatively few pupils need additional learning support. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, and almost all pupils speak English as their first language.

The school has gained Investors in People status, the Healthy Schools Award, the Active Mark Award and recognition from the local authority for its ICT practice since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Staff and governors are right in judging that Sheredes Primary School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Its success is due to highly effective leadership and, in particular, the determination of the headteacher. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and its expectations that their children can achieve high standards. One parent said, 'I feel privileged that my children are at Sheredes and I am grateful for the headteacher's massive efforts'. The headteacher is single-minded in her drive to help all pupils achieve their very best. She has very high expectations of everyone, both pupils and teachers. She sets challenging targets, and makes sure they have the resources and guidance to achieve them. She is supported by a highly effective team of staff and governors.

Teaching is of a very high quality, but teachers continually seek ways of making it better, whether this is through sharing their ideas or seeking advice from experts. This was noted by one parent who said, 'I am pleased that the school is always seeking to improve itself'. Teachers make lessons very interesting, question pupils skilfully and show how much they value everyone's contribution. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations by trying hard and being very keen to do well. As one Year 6 pupil put it, 'Teachers are firm, but fair. They always want to help us to try to do our best'. Pupils are clear about the purpose of what they are doing and how to judge if they are successful. Using computers and other new technology at every opportunity not only adds much interest but also develops and extends the pupils' ICT skills to a high level.

By setting challenging targets, regularly checking to see how well each pupil is doing and taking steps to ensure these targets are met, achievement is outstanding. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 build rapidly on their excellent start in the Foundation Stage. Test results have risen in recent years and were very high in 2007. Virtually all pupils reach nationally expected standards by the time they go on to secondary school and many exceed these in all areas. The recent successful focus on improving the pupils' writing has been tackled with great determination. Standards are high, but the headteacher and staff are continuing to seek to raise them even further.

High achievement extends beyond the core subjects. Parents and pupils are pleased with the way that teachers broaden and add interest to school life. Art plays a major part, as seen in the high quality of the work on display. Pupils are keen to learn the wide range of modern languages available, either in lessons or clubs. They value very considerably the wide range of additional activities and participate in large numbers, particularly when sport is involved. Enrichment activities, such as the 'Mad Science' day, stand out in their minds and they are proud of the part the school council played in asking for the 'Problem-solving' week.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life and attend very regularly. They greatly value the opportunity to take responsibility or to have a voice in the school's development. They show a keen interest in environmental issues and are proud of their part in the introduction of the 'anti-squirrel' litterbins. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities to collaborate when tackling tasks or when assessing each other's work. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is of a very high standard. They are polite, courteous and confident. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and they are coping well with the current building work. Pupils fully understand the value of diet and exercise in helping them to live healthily. Sport plays a major part in the life of the school, as recognised when gaining the 'Active Mark'

accreditation. The pupils' outstanding personal development, along with the high standards they achieve, prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Parents are delighted that securing the safety and welfare of their children is given top priority. Outstanding care, support and guidance play a further crucial role in the pupils' development, particularly when focusing on the needs of each individual. Pupils receiving additional literacy support make great strides and usually reach standards expected of 11-year-olds, and speech therapists help the school to devise successful programmes for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Pupils' talents are recognised and excellent use is made of very close links with local secondary schools to develop their skills further, such as through the 'Forensic Science' day for a small group of particularly able pupils. The academic guidance teachers provide is exemplary in many ways. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the next steps in their learning. Marking gives clear guidance on how to improve and teachers check that notice has been taken of their recommendations.

The headteacher's vision and determination are shared by all staff and backed up by very rigorous management systems. Everyone is involved in checking how well the school is doing and in forward planning. The drive to improve and high expectations of what can be achieved, place the school in a very strong position to become even more successful.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The youngest children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage. Links with home and pre-school settings, such as the playgroup, help to give the children a very smooth beginning to school life. Children who started the Nursery class in the last few weeks are already working and playing with confidence. The staff team works well together to plan a wide range of tasks that interest the children and promote all areas of their learning. From starting points around those expected of three-year-olds, children make outstanding progress so that any weaknesses in aspects of their personal development and communication on entry are more than eliminated. As a result, the children's skills develop very well in all areas of learning and are higher than usually found nationally by the end of Reception. There has been a seamless transition to new leadership, because the staff team pulls together to a common purpose. The excellent balance between activities directed by the adults and those initiated by the children, helps them to learn how to take responsibility for their learning and make sensible choices. The outdoor area has seen recent improvements but its use is limited during inclement weather. Appropriate further improvement plans are in place in order to utilise its potential fully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue with the plans to improve further the outdoor learning area in Reception so that it can be used to even greater effect.

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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

23 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sheredes Primary School, Hoddesdon, EN11 8LL

I am writing to thank you very much for your warm welcome when I visited your school. You were very kind, polite and helpful. You showed me how proud you are of your school. I enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that your school is outstanding.

You make excellent progress during your time at school. Nearly all of you reach the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school and very many of you do better than this. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend very regularly, work extremely hard and behave sensibly. Your teachers provide interesting tasks to help you learn and you clearly enjoy extra activities such as trips and visits. I was impressed by how much you had enjoyed 'Mad Science'. All members of staff help to make sure you are safe and cared for very well. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a huge contribution to the life of the school. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. I really enjoyed the school lunch I had with you. You are lucky to have such tasty and healthy food.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. I think that there is one thing in particular they could do, so I have asked your teachers to continue to make even better use of the outside area for children in Reception.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make this improvement.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale Lead inspector