

Shaw Ridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126280
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315472
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Davies

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	338
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Harland
Headteacher	Sally Cowell
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
School address	Ridge Green Shaw Swindon SN5 5PU
Telephone number	01793 871601
Fax number	01793 878820

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the success of strategies to improve pupils' achievement, especially in writing, and including the use of opportunities to write in other subjects and stimulate the interest and participation of boys

the impact of improvements to assessment on the match of work and adaptation of teaching styles to meet the needs of pupils

how successfully the school manages changing circumstances and demands, including gaining the confidence and satisfaction of pupils and parents, and monitors the outcomes of initiatives in order to resolve inconsistencies in performance.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, assessment information, school documentation, pupils' work, questionnaires sent to parents and discussion with pupils, staff and the chair of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The number of pupils attending Shaw Ridge has increased since its last inspection and the school is now above average in size. Most pupils are from White British families, while others come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds; almost all of these pupils speak English well. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but is above average in some year groups, and includes pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

In September 2006, the school admitted a large group of pupils, mostly into Years 3 to 6, following the closure of a local school. New members of staff were also appointed at this time to teach and support additional classes. There is also a higher than average movement of pupils in and out of year groups on a more regular basis, some arriving late in their primary education at Year 6. Six pupils have joined the present Year 6, for example, during this school year. A new school is being built on the same site and while this is taking place, much of the school is housed in temporary accommodation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Shaw Ridge is a good school. It has had to accommodate considerable change over the last two years, and the staunchly positive views of the very large majority of its parents show that it has successfully sustained their trust and satisfaction. Several parents wrote to say how well the school has managed the demands of its growth in size and temporary disruptions caused by the building work, and pupils feel the same. One parent commented, 'The management team have maintained strong morale within the teaching team and pupil base.' Indeed, the school's good leadership and management come in for frequent praise from parents, with special mention of the conspicuous and dedicated influence of the headteacher. The skilful use of the short transitional period in advance of their arrival enabled the large group of new pupils to settle quickly into school life here. Staff members new to the school at that time report an immediate feel of one school working in harmony. Assembly time reflects a real sense of community, where pupils are happy and relaxed, relationships are warm and friendly, and behaviour is exemplary.

Pupils like their school a good deal. They report hardly any bullying and enjoy having plenty of friends to play with. Pupils clearly admire the school's strong care and support for individual pupils. They speak, for example, with pride about help given to those who come with little English so that these pupils are enabled to achieve well. Pupils who had challenging behaviour are now well integrated and they show quiet pleasure when they work hard and do well. Pupils' clear understanding of why they should not stray across the playground's yellow security lines illustrates their good sense in matters of safety. Similarly, their project to make and sell fruit 'smoothies' in school and their enthusiasm for extra-curricular sport reflects their appreciation of the need to keep healthy, as well as their willingness to participate in school life. Attendance is monitored and promoted rigorously, and the current average levels are caused for the most part by the irregular attendance of pupils who are at the school for only a short time.

Among the school's many attributes praised by parents and pupils is the quality of teaching and learning, which is good. Pupils find their learning fun and say that this helps when they are finding something difficult to understand. They also appreciate questions that guide them to recognise mistakes for themselves, rather than simply being told what they are! The wide range of extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits are popular. Exciting activities, like African drumming, result in high levels of concentration and enjoyment. Writing has been relatively weak right across the school and recent initiatives have been crucial in raising its profile, for example by extending pupils' vocabulary and promoting thorough preparation in advance of written tasks. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated. Stimulating topics – usually linked with other subjects such as history – also act as a powerful incentive for writing. These activities provide good levels of challenge and successfully capture the attention and interest of boys and girls. Practical investigative work is an integral feature of teaching science, and this subject is put to good use to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

All these positive factors contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement and prepare them well for adult life. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the very few learning to speak English for the first time make the same rate of progress as others. More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress enables staff to pinpoint where pupils need to move on at a faster pace, set challenging targets and get the match of work right. Indeed, data show that some pupils have made extremely rapid progress this year, but the school knows that remaining

inconsistencies in progress across and within year groups mean that it must maintain its vigilance and effort as key priorities.

Good progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2 results in above average standards by the time pupils move on into Year 3. The impact of recent initiatives to promote more rapid achievement means that pupils also progress well during Years 3 to 6. Indeed, the school's assessment information indicates that standards in the present Year 6 have improved on those of 2007 at the higher levels in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, these year groups have been affected more than others by the arrival of the large group of new pupils and by the ongoing movement of pupils in and out of the school. The school takes the needs of new pupils seriously and makes them feel very welcome. Nevertheless, these changes have lowered the overall attainment profile of each year group. As a result, standards at Year 6 last year were broadly average, as they are for the current group.

Senior members of staff have taken clear and decisive action to adapt the school's provision to the change in its circumstances. In addition to the work completed prior to the arrival of new pupils, targeted pastoral support in the first year helped create the shared culture and ethos necessary for good learning. Improvements in provision are moving on at a good pace and establishing greater consistency in pupils' performance. At the heart of improvements are those to assessment. This source of information in particular provides the school with well focused priorities and clear direction. Governors are experienced, well informed and give the school a good level of support and challenge. In all these things, the school shows that it is well placed to move forward. Subject leadership has also been reorganised to accommodate new demands. These leaders are already closely involved with monitoring the school's work and outcomes. However, they have yet to fully develop their work to improve teaching and learning and resolve remaining inconsistencies in the quality of both. There are still shortcomings, even sometimes within good lessons, that inhibit consistently good and rapid progress and prevent teaching from being outstanding. Opportunities are not always taken to ensure pupils play a fully active part in lessons when, for example, drama is used as a stimulus, a text is read aloud or the computerised whiteboards are used for demonstration. Sometimes, pupils who remain quiet and passive during discussion are not encouraged to respond. Occasionally, those who have already finished a task or who need some help to make a start are left for too long.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Happy and confident children illustrate the success of good provision in the Reception classes. Having entered the school with broadly expected attainment, children's standards move on to just above average levels by Year 1. Their good progress is particularly evident in their personal and social maturity. Children clear away their things without being asked; they work extremely well together and are equally confident asking for a bit of help, starting a conversation with adults or talking with enthusiasm and knowledge about what they are doing. Lively discussion, with a good mix of practical activity and more formal recording, successfully reinforces key knowledge - when exploring all the different combinations to make six and ten, for example. Follow up tasks can sometimes lack imagination, but children are motivated and keen and, supported by well focused conversation with adults, waste no time getting their work completed and with accuracy. They handle small equipment with skill, for instance painting characters from 'Jack and the Beanstalk' with great care.

Staff across the two classes work closely together in their shared classroom and it is a lively environment with plenty of work and activity across all areas of learning. Children benefit from

plenty of space in the outdoor area for riding wheeled toys and learning about road safety, but the school is aware that this area is ripe for further development so that it provides a wider range of resources and activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure progress is always good and better across and within all year groups, particularly to raise standards above average levels at Year 6.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they play a full part in monitoring and improving teaching and learning.

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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?	2
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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

5 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shaw Ridge Primary School, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 5PU

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly when I visited you recently. This letter is to tell you that Shaw Ridge is a good school. Many of your parents wrote to tell me how much they like it and what a good job it is doing and you clearly think so, too. You are all doing well, not only in your work in lessons, but also in becoming thoughtful and caring people. Your school has been through quite a lot of change in the last couple of years. All the adults in school, including the governors, have managed the changes well and made sure that you all learn together in a happy and friendly community.

Here are some other important things about your school:

- You all behave extremely well and feel that staff take good care of everyone – which they do!
- You think lessons are fun and interesting and your good attention and hard work shows how much you enjoy them.
- You like all the extra activities, too, and the chance to take responsibilities and make decisions, like 'buddying' other pupils and starting a fruit 'smoothie' enterprise.
- Staff keep a very careful check on your progress so they know who needs to make faster progress and what they need to do to help them to do better.
- Those of you who are new to the school feel well supported.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- Make sure everyone's progress is always good and better, especially to raise standards even higher at Year 6.
- Ensure that those members of staff who look after each subject check the quality of teaching very carefully in order to make sure that it gets better and better.

I hope you continue to enjoy all the exciting activities at your school and work hard now and in the future.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely Patricia Davies Lead inspector