

# Shire Oak VC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131570
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	315833
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April –1 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ronald Cohen

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Janie Percy-Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Edwards
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Wood Lane Headingley Leeds West Yorkshire LS6 2DT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 275 5890
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 275 5890

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<b>Age group</b>	5-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Shire Oak Primary opened as a new school in September 2006, following the amalgamation of two primary schools that closed. It serves the central area of Headingley in Leeds. The school was established as a one-form entry school but, currently, has higher numbers in the upper part of the school to accommodate the pupils from the two closed schools. Since the school opened it has also admitted additional children from two other closing schools in the wider locality. The school serves an ethnically and socially diverse population, with higher than average proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils whose families are from minority ethnic groups is more than double the national average, but only a small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school, with several good features. These include the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; pupils' personal development; the curriculum and the pastoral care which pupils receive.

Children enter the school at Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of their age. However, there is a wide variation in attainment with some children attaining well below expectations and others above expectations. Irrespective, their education gets off to a cracking start in the Reception class and they make good progress. In the current Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Writing remains an area for development, however, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, this is a commendable situation for pupils who have experienced the full brunt of settling into a new school after previous experience elsewhere.

Parents rightly praise the strengths of the school. They greatly value the fact that the school nurtures their children, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to become confident and happier individuals. This is reflected in the good standard of pupils' personal development and well-being. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are well cared for and are given opportunities to play a full part in school life. The good curriculum is innovative, relevant and stimulating. Teaching is satisfactory, though sometimes good and, occasionally, outstanding. The best teaching puts pupils' learning at the heart of lessons so that they are actively engaged in their learning. In too many lessons, however, the teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to learn through practical activities. Consequently, their interest wanes, they lose concentration and so do not learn as well as they could. The quality of marking is also inconsistent in informing pupils of their strengths and how they might improve.

Parents overwhelmingly expressed the confidence which they have in the leadership and management of the school. They point up the success of the headteacher who is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and encouraged by a knowledgeable and committed governing body. Parents understand that, against the challenging and difficult background of amalgamation, these leaders have created a vision and an ethos that has resulted in a positive, calm and welcoming atmosphere in school. Leaders have been the driving force behind a range of initiatives that have had significant impact in a short time. They are building a well-focused team who share their determination to raise standards even further and to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. However, they recognise that their monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress is not frequent enough to ensure that standards and achievement improve as quickly as they might. Nevertheless, their undisputed successes so far, which have laid the firm foundations for success in such a short time, clearly show that the school has good capacity for its future development.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills broadly typical for their age. Good teaching and learning ensure that they make good progress. They enter school from a wide range of settings and settle quickly as a result of thoughtful induction procedures. Good leadership has established good teamwork and effective practice. Children thrive in a calm, happy and stimulating environment and best use has been made of the available outdoor space. Children benefit from well-planned opportunities to develop independent learning skills and they become

confident learners. They are polite, sensitive to the needs of others and work cooperatively. Teacher-led activities are well planned to meet children's needs and this supports their good progress. Children use the interactive whiteboard independently and with confidence to extend their learning. 'Stay and Play' provides an increasing number of parents and carers with good opportunities to be involved with their children's learning.

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

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in writing at Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching, including marking, so it is more consistent and the best practice is replicated across the school.
- Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress to move improvements to standards and achievement on more quickly.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Cohorts of pupils have had different experiences and, apart from the children in Reception and Year 1, none has yet had the complete 'Shire Oak' experience. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. Current standards of pupils in Year 2 are about average. This is better than depicted in the national assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2007, when standards were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current standards show little difference between subjects, though writing is a little weaker than reading and mathematics. In 2007, the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 were broadly average overall. The current group of Year 6 pupils' standards are similar. Again, writing is a key, though not exclusive, area for development. Overall, pupils' standards represent satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well and make good progress. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make good progress in this aspect of their learning.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's strong links with a partner school in Sri Lanka are used particularly effectively to give pupils a strong awareness of different cultures and world faiths. Behaviour throughout school is good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils respond enthusiastically to any responsibilities given to them. Pupils' contribution to the community is another developing strength. In school, pupils have a very active school council and pupils run the school tuck shop and their own fair trade business. These experiences are effective in preparing pupils for the future. However, because of relative weaknesses in key skills, such as writing, pupils' potential future economic well-being is satisfactory rather than good. Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of leading a fit and healthy lifestyle. They engage in many of the sporting activities promoted by the school. They understand the importance of healthy eating.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but range in quality. Some lessons progress at a fast pace with activities that challenge pupils. Expectations are high and the match of work to the needs of individual learners is good. In such lessons, teachers use perceptive questioning that extends pupils' thinking. Where teaching is only satisfactory, there is often too much talking by the teachers. Pupils become passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. As a result, pupils lose concentration, and progress slows. The quality of marking also varies in its contribution to raising standards. Some marking informs pupils clearly not only how well they have done, but also of what they need to do in order to improve. However, such systems are not used sufficiently consistently to challenge all pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum has bold and innovative characteristics which make it exciting and stimulating. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, and also links subjects together well, under interesting banner titles, such as 'Rock and Roll' and 'Cool Planet'. These help pupils to appreciate the relevance of their learning as they apply their skills and knowledge in different contexts. The wider curriculum has a large range of after-school clubs and residential visits for pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care for the pupils' pastoral development and well-being is good. Required safeguarding features are all in place and are adhered to rigorously. Staff know the pupils well and this helps them to support any pupils experiencing learning difficulties or emotional problems. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for. Good partnerships with outside agencies, the work of the learning mentor and the 'nurture group' for the more vulnerable pupils, help to ensure that all pupils benefit fully from the curriculum. Academic guidance and support is satisfactory overall but not yet as well developed as pastoral guidance.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the headteacher's good leadership and enthusiasm, very ably backed by a conscientious and capable deputy headteacher, are galvanising everyone to take this new school forward. They have set a clear direction for the promotion of high standards of care and, in this, they are very successful. They have not yet attained a similar degree of success in terms of promoting high standards of education throughout the school. Of most significance has been the introduction of a good assessment system, which identifies pupils' attainment levels and allows their progress to be tracked. The school's leadership recognises the need to refine the use of this system in order to improve pupils' achievement and standards. Governors have a clear vision for the development of the school. They are fully

committed to the achievement and well-being of pupils. They carry out their statutory duties well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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## 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	NA
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?	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	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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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	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**

Inspection of Shire Oak Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Leeds,  
LS6 2DT

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to us about your school and your work. The school provides you with a satisfactory education, and I agree with what you told me - it is getting better and better. The headteacher and teachers have created a caring school community where you enjoy learning and feel safe. You mostly behave well in lessons and like to concentrate on your work. You also enjoy and benefit from the range of opportunities the school provides in clubs and visits to interesting places.

Some of you told me that you find some of the lessons less interesting than others because you just listen and do not do enough things for yourselves. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that all your lessons are as interesting and challenging as they can be. We have also asked the headteacher and teachers to make sure you always understand what you need to do in order to improve your work. This will help you to make good progress in every lesson.

The headteacher is keen to keep improving the school and, with the staff, knows exactly what to do to make it even better. We have asked the teachers to be especially careful to help you with your writing in Years 3 to 6, and we have asked the school to keep a closer eye on how well you are learning.

I wish you all the best for the future.