

Shotton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114152
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325954
Inspection dates	1–2 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	376
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ivan Cochrane
Headteacher	Ms Rachel Orr
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Grange Terrace Shotton Colliery Durham County Durham DH6 2JP
Telephone number	0191 5262006
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This above average size primary school serves families from the villages of Shotton and Haswell that were once East Durham mining communities in a locality with areas of economic disadvantage. A well above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British families. Of the few from other ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Asian heritage, a small number are learning English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Nursery and Reception Years.

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 its pupils with a satisfactory education. It is an improving school and some aspects of its work are good. The recently appointed headteacher, well supported by her new leadership team, successfully promotes her vision for a caring and successful school. Pupils' accomplishments reflect good achievement. Pupils' well-being and personal development are good and are supported by the school's strong links with nearby schools, the village community and the local authority. Although some parents of younger pupils have some reservations about class organisation in Reception and Year 1, most have confidence in the school. One parent's comments sum up their views. 'I am really pleased with my son's progress this year because his class teacher knows him well and makes lessons interesting. I am happy and comfortable talking to his teacher about any concerns I have and feel that they are dealt with.'

Overall, most pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress accelerates markedly in response to good teaching in this key stage, particularly of older pupils. In 2008, the school exceeded its challenging targets in mathematics. Targets in English were met although standards were below average. Overall satisfactory teaching and a good curriculum, with well planned opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom and contribute to their community, help them to develop good personal qualities. The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are satisfactory. Although information about pupils' progress is diligently collected and used very effectively to help anyone falling behind, it is not used sufficiently to support more able pupils to reach the highest standards.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of diet, exercise and hygiene to promote a healthy lifestyle. The school deservedly holds the Healthy Schools and Activemark Gold awards. Pupils behave well and act safely, considerately and politely in and out of lessons. They are keen to answer questions, work enthusiastically and enjoy school immensely. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils are delighted when they do well and happily share the endeavours and success of others. They willingly contribute in many ways to their school and local community. Their sound basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for their future education.

The leadership team, working with governors, has made improvements in the issue for attention raised at the last inspection. A new writing initiative arrested the decline in standards and pupils are now making satisfactory progress in writing. It very effectively promotes community cohesion locally. However, the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' perspectives of the diversity of life in Britain and abroad. Governors and senior leaders are strongly committed to raising standards and this, with the school's clear track record of progress over the recent past, indicates a sound capacity for further improvement. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources and achieves satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter Nursery with skills in all areas of learning well below the levels typical for their age and levels of development on entry are declining year on year. Children make good progress in physical development and spoken language. Their progress in reading, writing, mathematical development and other areas

of learning is satisfactory. Children's personal and social development is good and is reflected in the way they are happily settled to play and work together. At the end of the Reception Year in 2008 many children had yet to reach the Early Learning Goals. New initiatives are clearly improving progress and raising standards in children's language, mathematical and personal development. Although children benefit from an appropriate balance between activities that adults lead and those that they choose themselves, outdoor facilities are not used sufficiently well to support the six areas of learning. Nevertheless, the school is improving provision for Reception and Year 1 mixed-age classes with the aid of weekly visits by specialist staff who bring their own resources to exemplify exciting outdoor learning, for example through den building and large scale painting. Attractive indoor workshop areas are used to extend children's learning and development more effectively. Sound procedures keep children safe and care for them. Home visits and meetings with new parents build positive relationships with the staff team and help to identify any children who have particular learning needs. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and receive effective support. The new learning diaries in the combined Reception and Year 1 classes are helping to build a picture of children's achievements but their use is inconsistent throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Within the separate Nursery and Reception/Year 1 classes, staff miss routine opportunities to assess, observe and record what children can do. They make insufficient use of assessment information to plan activities that suit everyone, especially to extend learning by able children. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The steps taken to improve provision are appropriate but it is too soon to evaluate their impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve strategies to assess, observe and record what children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can do to promote more effective learning.
- Raise standards and improve the progress made by more able pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6.
- Raise standards in English.

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: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Given their starting points, pupils make good overall progress and reach broadly average standards by Year 6. Pupils begin Year 1 with skills and abilities which are below, sometimes well below, average; they make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and by age seven standards are below average. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress accelerates in response to more effective teaching and most pupils reach broadly average standards overall in Year 6. Standards in Key Stage 2 are rising year on year. In 2008, standards were average in mathematics and science, and lower in English with few pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5). Although boys did not do as well as girls, especially in English, both did equally well in mathematics. Many able pupils, who began Key Stage 2 with above average standards, made satisfactory progress. Taking pupils' backgrounds and starting points into consideration the majority achieved well by the time they left school.

The new senior leadership team's determination to raise standards has led to improvement this year. Work to improve mathematics shows pupils are now making good progress in both key

stages. Many pupils currently in Year 6 are well on track to meet their challenging targets. The school's attention to improve English is showing signs of success with good progress evident, especially in reading, although fewer able pupils than predicted are on track to reach the higher level. As a result of very effective, well-tailored support, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good and sometimes excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and reflects good provision. The extent to which pupils enjoy their education is excellent. They participate wholeheartedly in assemblies, which contribute markedly to their spiritual development. For example, they were very attentive in an assembly where they listened intently to a moral story presented with confidence and cleverly illustrated with computer graphics by older pupils. Pupils acquire a very good understanding of a healthy lifestyle through taking part in a wide range of sporting activities and by adopting healthy eating habits throughout the day. They are complimentary about arrangements to assure their safety and say that levels of bullying are low. Their good standards of behaviour in and out of the classroom are complemented by the consideration and courtesy they show to each other and to adults. Pupils are keen to learn and participate fully in lessons. They thoroughly enjoy voluntary after-school clubs and success in competitive sport. Despite efforts to improve it, attendance has remained only just in line with the national average and that of similar schools in recent years. There is a small number of persistent absentees. Pupils willingly take on many responsibilities in school. Their proactive school council has enhanced facilities. Older pupils, trained as leaders and buddies, contribute to the school community by helping younger ones during breaks. Pupils have a strong grasp of their own heritage through participation in village life but less so of wider British and global perspectives. Their social skills are good and they are well informed about secondary education. These capabilities, together with their average basic skills, provide sound preparation for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is improving as a result of successful training. Teaching is strongest towards the end of Key Stage 2 helping pupils to accelerate their learning and reach broadly average standards. Initiatives to raise standards in mathematics and writing are improving progress and standards. In the most effective lessons pupils know what they will be learning, activities hold their interest, motivate them to work industriously and give good opportunities for discussion. Teachers check their learning and reinforce their understanding. Pupils' positive attitudes lead them to work well together, to concentrate, persevere at their tasks and be proud to show their achievements. In lessons that are satisfactory, rather than good, planning is less effective because activities are less securely based upon pupils' prior abilities, and their next steps in learning are not clearly identified. Class teachers and their assistants focus support on those who need particular help to good effect, but lesson activities do not always cater well enough for the more able pupils. Recently implemented arrangements for marking praise pupils' efforts and reflect how well they meet the criteria for success in their work, but marking does not always give clear pointers on how to improve to the next level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Colourful, high quality displays of pupils' work reflect the many rich opportunities taken to enhance their understanding. An exciting range of visits and visitors motivates pupils to learn and extend their knowledge and cultural development. A large number of pupils happily take part in the many sporting activities available. Fruitful partnerships with local performing arts and sports colleges widen pupils' experience of music, drama, dance and many sports, thus making a substantial contribution to their cultural development and fitness. Pupils thoroughly enjoy acquiring team working skills through sport and activities at a residential outdoor education centre. Together with a well structured series of lessons to support pupils' social and emotional development, these are major contributors in promoting pupils' good personal development. The curriculum is successfully adapted to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Some aspects stand out, for example in the way all staff are committed to the welfare of pupils and successfully promote the school's ethos of consideration and respect for others. Effective arrangements and supervision allow pupils to safely enjoy their friendships, play energetically or to enjoy quiet socialising at break-times. Strong partnerships with outside agencies successfully support pupils' emotional development and promote well-being. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils through child protection, recruiting staff, and health and safety checks meet current government requirements. The school now tracks and analyses pupils' progress effectively. Information is used well to identify and successfully support pupils who are at risk of falling behind and those receiving intensive support are included fully in learning alongside their classmates. However, the school recognises that its information is not yet fully used to extend able pupils' learning in lessons. Arrangements to encourage good attendance are satisfactory but do not yet foster a culture among parents that appreciates its full importance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of the new senior leadership team diligently monitor teaching and analyse pupils' performance. Their comprehensive review and self-evaluation with the staff accurately estimate the school's effectiveness. This joint approach leads appropriately to key priorities for raising standards and improving pupils' personal development in a well thought out and sharply focused development plan. Their use of challenging targets is raising standards and achievement, although it is too soon to evaluate fully the impact of the new leadership. They recognise the need to ensure consistently good teaching and to continue to raise standards, especially for more able pupils. Governance is satisfactory. The new governing body has a clear knowledge of the school gained through receiving lucid reports from senior leaders. Governors know that to enhance their contribution to the review of the school, their next step is to gain a first-hand impression of how things stand.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shotton Primary School, Durham, DH6 2JP

Mrs Richardson, Mr Hall and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. We know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you. We were delighted to see how much you like to take part enthusiastically in activities during and after school, how you value the friendships you make and the help you get. You are well behaved and polite to others in lessons and around the school. We were pleased to see how you contribute to school life, for example, as school councillors and buddies to help others.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. It is warm and welcoming. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Last year most children in the Nursery and Reception classes made satisfactory progress and by the time pupils left Year 6 they made good progress. We noted that the Year 6 results showed an improvement last year. Although results in tests you all have to take in Year 6 were close to the national average, some of the more able pupils did not do as well as expected. English results were not as high as in mathematics. When we looked at your books we liked the way your teachers let you know what they expect you to learn and how well you are doing.

We have asked your teachers to help children in Nursery and Reception to learn more, and to help able pupils to reach higher standards. We have also asked them to continue to help all of you to improve your work in English.

You have very many opportunities at Shotton Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. We hope that you all do really well.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector