

Shipbourne School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118311
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326803
Inspection date	18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	56
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	Ian King
Headteacher	Cathy Farthing
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stumble Hill Shipbourne Tonbridge TN11 9PB
Telephone number	01732 810344
Fax number	01732 811355

Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The progress of pupils through the school currently and the reasons for a dip in standards in 2008.
- How the school tracks pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of teaching in meeting the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

Shipbourne School is smaller than most other primary schools, with just two classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside Years 1 and 2 pupils. In both classes, pupils are split into groups for many of their lessons. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. At the time of the last inspection, proposals to close the school had just been dropped and the uncertainty had resulted in a fall in the school roll. Since then a significant number of pupils joined the school part-way through their primary education. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high. These needs cover a wide range but are mainly in the category of speech, language and communication difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good and improving school is highly valued by parents who were wholly positive in their responses to the inspection questionnaire. One comment echoed the sentiments of many, 'We are very proud of our village school. The threat of closure made everyone realise how much we had to lose. There is a happy atmosphere and children thrive.' Pupils are equally positive in their support of all that the school offers, making comments such as 'It's brilliant' and 'We are really happy and proud to be here.' The school has effectively addressed the areas previously identified for improvement and it now has some excellent features, so that it is well placed for future improvement.

The small number of pupils in each year group means that comparisons with national averages on standards and achievement are not fully reliable. However, the school has a good track record of above average results in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests. Last year test results fell, particularly in Year 6. Taking pupils' starting points when they joined the school into account, alongside the significant learning difficulties of some of the group, this still represents good achievement for the group. Standards throughout the school this year are higher, with many pupils working above the nationally expected levels. Most pupils are on course to meet the challenging targets the school has set for them. Pupils generally achieve equally well in English, mathematics and science. The school's tracking data show that pupils make consistent progress through the school. Pupils' achievements are monitored regularly and very prompt action is taken if anyone is not making the expected progress, so that all groups of pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. This was described by one parent as 'lots of personalised support'.

Consistent high-quality care, guidance and support are key factors in contributing to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the school's family atmosphere, as shown by their good attendance. Their behaviour is exemplary and relationships are strong and supportive. Pupils are articulate and know that their views are valued. They develop a strong sense of responsibility, shown for example in the way older pupils look after and play with younger children, providing excellent role models. Pupils' consideration for each other helps all to play safely together. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are fully involved in many activities locally and they develop an awareness of diversity within Britain through an ongoing link with a school where pupils come from many different cultural backgrounds. Reciprocal visits and sending emails make important contributions to the school's promotion of community cohesion. Video conferencing as part of the curriculum also helps pupils to understand life in other schools as well as giving them access to subject expertise not available in the school, and is only one example of the way the school uses modern technologies to enliven learning. The school's excellent work in promoting healthy lifestyles is seen in the recent Healthy School award and in the enthusiasm with which pupils grow vegetables to cook in school or sell at the local farmers' market. Such activities make a strong contribution to pupils' social skills and financial awareness, supporting their personal development and future economic well-being. The school uses its sports partnerships very well to give pupils opportunities to try out a wide range of sport. Pupils are very active, regularly participating in sports activities, swimming weekly and through the daily 'fun, fit and frantic' session at the start the day.

The curriculum offers pupils an outstanding range of rich experiences, both in lessons and through an impressive range of extra-curricular activities for a small school. Together with good

teaching, the curriculum makes learning fun and effective. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan work that matches pupils' abilities and earlier learning well. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that learning is taken forward quickly. Lessons are planned effectively and teachers use their in-depth knowledge of individuals' progress to group pupils according to their needs rather than their age. Pupils speak positively about being able to work with pupils from other year groups for different activities so that their tasks are appropriately challenging. A particular feature of learning is the excellent use of the school grounds and the village surroundings. Younger pupils use their outdoor area as a genuine outdoor classroom, spreading a carpet on the ground so that they can sit or kneel comfortably. Pupils take care with their work but because much of their writing and mathematics is recorded in different books and folders it is not always possible for them to see their progress easily. Teachers give pupils good guidance about how work could be improved but do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to the advice they are given.

Parents express their confidence in and appreciation of the work and approachability of the headteacher and staff. The headteacher provides sensitive and strong leadership and combines this with a significant teaching commitment to good effect. This has resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly in pupils' personal development and the creation of a vibrant curriculum. Good leadership and management are reflected in the way all adults work together effectively to review practice and decide what needs to improve. Governors are fully involved in key decisions, for example in harnessing the support of the community to enrich learning and in giving direct support for projects such as developing the wild garden. They have a strong awareness of the school's work, and fulfil their roles effectively. The school engages very well with external bodies to provide additional support when this is needed. Consequently, the school is constantly finding ways to remove potential barriers to learning for pupils and to support parents, particularly in times of difficulty.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The levels of skills and abilities of children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year, from broadly average to above average. Children make good progress from their starting points and typically all or almost all children reach or exceed the expected levels by the end of the year. A buddying system helps to make sure that children quickly feel at home in the school. The arrangement for reception children to be taught separately for some of the time works well. Children's personal development is excellent, with adults acting as very good role models. Adults also involve children in a carefully structured range of speaking and listening activities, for example exploring and extending their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Short speaking activities where children talk to their 'response partners' also help them to develop and articulate their ideas. Good use is made of a small outdoor classroom and the school grounds, including the garden area and greenhouse, and the school is considering how to promote physical development further by developing more opportunities for adventurous play.

Children play and work together very well. For example at break, most of the reception group sat beneath a picnic bench, pretending it was a house. They 'opened the windows' to call out to children in other years, who were delighted. Regular assessments of children's progress are made and discussed to plan the next steps for their learning. However, there is some inconsistency in the way these assessments are recorded in the Foundation Stage profile, meaning that it is not always possible to see quickly the overall picture of children's progress across all the areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils have enough opportunities to respond to the advice they are given when teachers mark their work.
- Organise pupils' and children's work so that they and teachers can see their progress more easily.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	2
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

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	1
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shipbourne School, Tonbridge, TN11 9PB

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work, from 'fun, fit and frantic' first thing in the morning to coming back from swimming at the end of the day. Shipbourne is a good school and your parents are very pleased that you are able to go there.

Your behaviour is excellent and this helps you all to get on really well together. You are safe and very well looked after. This helps you to develop maturity that will be important to you as you move on to secondary school. We enjoyed hearing about the number of visits and visitors, and the wide range of after-school activities that the school organises. It is good that most of you take part in these opportunities.

You work hard in lessons and this helps you to do well in tests. Teachers make your lessons interesting and are always looking at ways to make your topics and activities even more fascinating for you. We liked the way you have opportunities to work in different groups and you told us that you find it helpful in your learning.

We have suggested that teachers find a way for you to organise your work differently. We think that if you keep all your writing or mathematics in one place rather than in different books and folders then it will be easier for you to see how well you are doing. We have also asked them to give you time to study the helpful comments they make on your work or sometimes give you an extra task just to make sure that you have a chance to follow their advice.

Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful to hear what they had to say about the school. We wish everyone at Shipbourne School well for the future and Year 6 pupils success in their new school in September.

Keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector