

Sharlston Community School (3-11)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108156
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	337029
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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 of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr P Loosemore
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Riley
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at (among other documentation), the school's development plan, the latest School Improvement Partner Annual Report to Governors, the most recent national and school data on attainment and progress, the latest attendance figures and a sample of pupils' books from Years 2, 4 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. Documentation on safeguarding was also scrutinised. In addition 27 parental questionnaires were analysed, along with questionnaires returned by staff and a representative sample from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils are doing and how the school is seeking to raise standards
- how effective teaching is and whether weaknesses are holding pupils back
- whether, and to what extent, pupils know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve
- how well issues from the last inspection have been addressed
- how effective new and established leaders and managers are in driving forward school improvements.

Information about the school

Sharlston is an average sized community primary school with a Children's Centre on site, situated to the east of Wakefield. Almost all pupils are White British and live in the immediate area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very small. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The deputy head teacher is currently acting headteacher after the retirement of the headteacher at the end of the summer term. The school achieved Healthy School's status and the Activemark in 2007. The Early Years Provision is made up of Nursery, known in school as the Lower Foundation Stage and Reception, Upper Foundation Stage.

The school is Wakefield's resource for visually impaired pupils. The resource can accommodate up to eight pupils; currently no pupils attend this unit.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Sharlston Community School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Particular strengths are the good quality provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially for Nursery children, and in some outcomes for pupils. For example, pupils usually behave well, feel safe and know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors agree with the comments of a pupil that the school is 'a happy place'. Children enter school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those typical for their age. However, by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, they have made good progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall through Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, attainment in English, mathematics and science is close to the national average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, and this is why the overall effectiveness of the school is judged to be satisfactory. The school is a cohesive community; the school council has a high profile, relationships in school are good and both national and international links are developing to help develop pupils' understanding of the multicultural world. Satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's work.

The acting headteacher has made a positive start to her new post. Under her leadership, there are early signs of a clear drive to secure further improvement. For example, priorities to move the school forward are the appropriate ones, and are being rigorously pursued. The leadership has a largely accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. Subject leaders have adequate knowledge of the areas they lead, but have yet to become fully effective in monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching. The governing body supports and challenges the school satisfactorily, but has not been active enough in monitoring provision. Issues from the last inspection have been partially addressed. Attendance is slowly rising and links with parents are steadily improving. Teaching and learning, and the use of assessment to support learning, are satisfactory. However, teaching is still too varied, as it was at the time of the last inspection. As a result, progress is better in some classes than in others. Attainment is, therefore, not as high as it could be by the time pupils leave. Despite the progress the school is making, the current capacity for sustained improvement is judged satisfactory rather than good or better.

This is because:

- some leaders are new to their roles
- some initiatives, such as enabling pupils to take greater ownership of their learning, are at an early stage and are not consistent between classes
- some self-evaluation strategies are not yet embedded in the school's work or sharp enough.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching in all classes to that of the best practice by:
 - focusing more sharply on pupils' learning when checking on the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that enough time is provided in lessons for pupils to work independently
 - keeping the pace of lessons brisk to maintain pupils' interest and involvement and facilitate learning
 - ensuring that work is always challenging, especially for the most able
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work, exploration and discovery to help bring learning alive
 - ensuring that pupils always know what they are learning, what they have learnt and what they need to do next.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - increasing accountability so that all teachers play a full part in securing school improvement
 - providing more opportunities for subject leaders to regularly monitor all aspects of their subjects to help them to identify what works well and what needs doing next
 - ensuring that all governors acquire the necessary information and skills that will enable them to support and challenge the school's performance effectively and set a clear direction for their work.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils enjoy lessons. They are often keen to learn when lessons interest and challenge them, and they have time to work at their own rate. However, some lessons are dull and pupils have to listen to the teacher for too long. As a result, time for them to work independently is 'at a premium' which slows their progress. Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good leadership, teaching and provision. It is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 1 and 2 because pupils learn at a faster rate in some classes than in others. In the most recent teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting the picture over the past four years. However, more pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and writing this year than in 2008, providing evidence that recently introduced strategies, such as daily language sessions, are proving successful in driving up

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standards. In most of the last five years, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, as some are given learning targets that are not precise enough to help them make good or better progress.

Pupils are well aware of the benefits of regular exercise, enjoy 'wake up, shake up' sessions and a recent 'mini Olympics', and know about healthy eating. They feel safe and secure and know who to turn to if there is a problem. Pupils have a voice in the school through the good work of the school council, with members taking their responsibilities very seriously. Support for charities helps them to develop their knowledge of citizenship. Their average attainment in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and in some classes their need to develop more independence in their learning, means that pupils are prepared adequately for the next stage of their education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils know right from wrong and get along well together. A 'Cultural Week' was held to help pupils develop an awareness of different ethnicities and cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Teaching quality varies considerably, which leads to pupils making uneven progress. The best lessons are typified by short, sharp and focused activities where there is a high level of active participation from pupils. There is some exemplary practice where pupils are really challenged to give of their very best, such as, through skilful and demanding questioning. In some successful lessons, pupils say how much they understand so the teacher can then help them where they are less sure, but these good practices are not consistent. There are examples of good practice where pupils are encouraged to develop their vocabulary. Here, they talk to their partners and then record useful words to use in their writing. However, sometimes, teachers talk too much, at the expense of pupils actually getting on with things themselves. Activities are sometimes too long and do not engage pupils enough. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to work using their own initiative. Sometimes not enough is expected of more-able pupils. The use of marking and target setting in lessons is inconsistent. As a result of inconsistent assessment practices, pupils sometimes do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum has a clear structure to help pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are starting to link subjects together to make learning more relevant, for example, in history when pupils write about ancient Greece and complete Tudor patterns in a link with information and communication technology (ICT). There are opportunities to fire pupils' imaginations through exciting first-hand experiences to help instil a love of learning. For example, in a recently held French Day, pupils built replicas of the Eiffel Tower and took part in French country dancing. However, these enjoyable opportunities are under-represented in some classes. ICT supports learning satisfactorily. Visits, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils to Robinwood, and visitors to the school, enrich pupils' experiences. Clubs, such as, sport, art and music, and links with nearby schools and outside organisations, help to extend learning.

The school has sound arrangements to support pupils who may be vulnerable and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are often well supported. However, some targets within individual education plans are not precise enough to enable progress to be regularly evaluated. The school does much to promote good attendance, but this is not yet reflected in good outcomes. Good links with the Children's Centre and the school to which most pupils transfer ensure a smooth transition to and from the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>3</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory. Under the acting headteacher's good leadership, a clear and accurate agenda for improvement has been established in which the school's mission statement ('Building for the future where every child matters') is at the core of planned developments. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development and have established a solid basis for improvement. The core subject (English, mathematics and science) leaders are keen to develop their skills to become more effective in monitoring the quality of pupils' learning. However, they are not yet as effective as they could be to enable them to make informed decisions about strengths and weaknesses. The acting head teacher has begun to increase accountability among all staff for raising standards, but this is still at an early stage. The supportive governing body meets its statutory requirements, but is not yet involved sufficiently in monitoring the school's work or setting its direction. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, checking on its quality is not yet sharply enough focused on pupils' learning to be of maximum benefit.

Courses for parents and activities, such as class assemblies, are helping to strengthen links with the community and improve relationships. Most parents are supportive of the school. Partnerships with a range of institutions and agencies, such as with the nearby church, local schools, a bank and sports clubs, make a sound contribution to pupils' learning and well-being. The school is inclusive, seeking always to treat all pupils fairly and equitably. For example, gifted and talented pupils are supported as part of a local schools' initiative and the very small number for whom English is an additional language are provided for soundly. Safeguarding requirements are met and help ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. The school is a cohesive community, with local links being strong. However, links with the wider world, such as with schools in Ghana and Canada, are in their early stages of development. Resources are soundly managed thus ensuring that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is well led and is successful in laying down secure foundations for future learning. From below average starting points in the Nursery they leave Reception with skills broadly expected for children of their age. Learning in the Nursery is exciting and stimulating, and there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. Adults provide good support for children, especially in developing their personal, social and language skills. In the Nursery, an excellent range of imaginative resources and the freedom for children to discover new things for themselves really makes play and learning fun. Personal development is a high priority and children are encouraged to think and carry things out for themselves, for example, by posting their names in the correct envelope at the start of the day. 'Nursery friends' are a novel way of reinforcing caring and helpful qualities among these very young children. However, practice is more formal for the small number of Reception children. They have fewer opportunities to learn by following their own interests through exploration and discovery. There is a daily opportunity for them to learn outside, but the play area is uninspiring. Thorough and secure teaching of a phonics programme is helping children make especially good progress in recognising words and the sounds they make.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are positive about the way their children are educated and nurtured in school. Over 95% of the parents who returned questionnaires responded positively to all but two of the questions. All those who returned the questionnaire feel that their child enjoys school and almost all that a healthy lifestyle is well promoted. While agreeing with some of the parents' and carers' views, inspectors found that some aspects of the school's work, especially those which relate to teaching, achievement and progress, are

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not as positive as parents judge them to be. Inspectors found no evidence to support the views of a small minority of parents that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sharlston Community School (3-11) to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	59	11	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	48	13	48	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	37	15	56	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	41	16	59	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	41	15	56	0	0	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	37	14	52	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	48	11	41	1	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	30	17	63	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	37	16	59	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	19	16	59	4	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	33	14	52	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	37	16	59	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	44	14	52	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



06 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sharlston Community School (3-11), Wakefield, WF4 1DH

Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors when we visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We very much enjoyed being in your school, visiting your lessons and listening to what you had to say.

We judged that you go to a satisfactory school and that there are some good things about it. Your parents and carers sent messages to tell me that they like lots of things about your school. I agree with some of the things they say, but not with everything. You told me that you like your school too, and I agree with most of your comments. These are some of the things I liked about your school:

- you are happy and most of you behave well
- you know how important it is to stay healthy and keep safe
- children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start
- more of you are coming to school regularly and arrive on time, and you must keep doing this so that you can join in with the fun of learning!
- your acting headteacher has made a good start in her new role.

You make satisfactory progress as you move from Year 1 to Year 6. However, at the moment you make better progress in some classes than in others. To help you make good progress in every class, I am asking your headteacher, teachers and governors of the school to:

- improve teaching so that it is all good, particularly making sure all your work is interesting and challenging and gives you opportunities to work independently and investigate things for yourselves
- ensure that you are always clear about what you are learning, how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve
- check more often how well the school and its teachers are doing so that they can find out what needs to be done to make it even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Derek Pattinson

Lead inspector

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