

# Shotley Bridge Infants' School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114038
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338280
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Potter

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	111
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael McBride
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynn Blacklock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Benfieldside Road Shotley Bridge Consett DH8 0SQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 40% of inspection time looking at learning, visited 15 lessons and saw five teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 55 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff.

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

- children's skills on entry and the progress they make throughout school
- the impact of strategies to close the gap between boys' and girls' attainment
- in the light of the temporary nature of the acting headteacher's appointment, the school's capacity to improve.

## Information about the school

This is a small infant school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from White British heritage backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Artsmark and the Naace ICT Mark awards. Children commence full-time education in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn term of their Reception Year. The acting headteacher has been in post since January 2009.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Shotley Bridge Infant School is a good school where pupils have high attainment and outstanding achievement and behaviour. They make good progress because teachers make learning fun and show outstanding care and support which ensure that pupils' well-being and personal development are promoted extremely well. As a result pupils are happy, feel safe and know how to stay healthy. Pupils' attainment is high because pupils are very keen to learn and are enthused by a range of interesting activities. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. Occasionally, there is too much emphasis on reinforcing skills rather than allowing pupils opportunities to practise them and some activities are not challenging enough for the most able pupils. The school has much useful data about pupils' skills and abilities but as yet they are not well enough used to target the needs of those pupils whom the school has identified as of the highest ability. There are highly effective procedures to involve parents in their children's learning so that all parents are extremely supportive of the school and the way in which it provides for pupils' social, moral and academic development.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average in all subjects and the percentage of pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 is also well above average. Boys' attainment is lower than girls but, because of the school's clear-sighted self-evaluation, strategies to support boys' learning were introduced and are effective. This ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The acting headteacher has stabilised and revitalised the school after a period of uncertainty. She has established strong relationships with the effective assistant headteacher and together they have involved all staff in school review and planning, established clear systems to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and been successful in raising attainment in school to its typically high level after a dip in 2008. Given the outstanding outcomes for pupils, the success of the school's strategies for improving standards, and the success of the governing body in guiding the school through a difficult period, the school's capacity to improve is good and it provides good value for money.

Pupils say that teachers help them so that they know how to improve their work. They have a developing influence on what happens in school and a good understanding of other faiths and cultures and of life in other countries. However, their understanding of the multicultural make-up of modern British society is less well developed.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Further improve the quality of learning by:
  - ensuring that data is well used so that work is well matched to the abilities of individual pupils, especially the most able
  - offering even more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects across the curriculum.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the multicultural make-up of modern British society.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

The extent to which pupils achieve in and enjoy their learning is outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well, have excellent attitudes and relationships in lessons and show great keenness to do well in their work. Indeed, many pupils are eager to extend their learning and talk enthusiastically about things they have learnt at home or new challenges which lie ahead. They enjoy learning for learning's sake and particularly thrive when they are involved in lively activities such as using role play to explore stories about dragons and playing games to develop their mathematical skills.

Progress is good in Key Stage 1, so that from starting points which are above average in English and mathematics, pupils reach well above average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils also show outstanding achievement in the arts and ICT where they show great skill in writing newspapers and creating computer art in the style of Kandinsky. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and show good progress.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement in dance and gymnastics and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They care for one another well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils willingly take on roles as classroom helpers, mini-buddies and school council members. They make a positive contribution to the school community and improvements to playground equipment have resulted from this. There are good links in the local area through a range of charities, participation in performances and activities with older residents and with the local churches. Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and they have researched what it is like to live in many other countries. However, their understanding of the multicultural make-up of modern British society is less well developed. They are extremely well equipped for their future economic well-being because they have outstanding skills in working collaboratively, well above average basic skills in English and mathematics and great confidence in the use of ICT.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

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

### How effective is the provision?

Good teaching, based on strong subject knowledge, positive relationships and the desire to make learning fun is a central feature of the school and contributes to the good progress pupils make. Lessons are well planned so that pupils are given opportunities to learn through practical and investigative activities and there are many opportunities for them to learn through games and using ICT. Teachers guide learning well using discussion, investigation and interactive whiteboard technology to engage pupils and to stimulate their thinking, for example, when teachers were helping pupils to plan their writing about Cinderella or showing pupils how to draw a portrait. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded, skilfully directing them to information that will support their learning. They use questions well to ascertain what pupils already know, although they occasionally miss opportunities to encourage pupils to explore their ideas further. Marking is well done so that pupils are clear about what they have achieved and know what they have to do to improve further. Teachers and teaching assistants are effective at supporting pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum contributes to high standards by offering pupils a wide range of challenging and creative activities which are increasingly based on pupils' own interests. There is a very strong focus on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that they achieve highly in these areas. There are many opportunities

<sup>1</sup> 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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for pupils to use their ICT skills and to write in subjects other than English, for example when they research and write about The Great Fire of London or about life in other countries such as India and Thailand. However, pupils' high abilities mean that they would benefit from even more opportunities to practise and apply their skills. There is a strong focus on learning about religious celebrations in Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism. All pupils learn French, they enjoy physical education, singing and art. The school provides many activities which enrich pupils' learning. For example, visits by authors and their own visits to places such as Beamish Museum and Souter lighthouse to support their learning. However, there are too few opportunities for them to participate in enterprise activities or find out about different jobs. They participate enthusiastically and successfully in a range of extra-curricular activities such as creative writing and dance.

All staff have detailed knowledge about individual pupils so that they are extremely well cared for and develop high levels of self-esteem, respect and responsibility. A key recent initiative has been the development of the excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those with complex medical needs. This is very well managed and there are effective programmes for intervention and support so that these pupils make good progress. There are well established practices to involve parents when their children enter school and good procedures as pupils move through school and on to junior school. The school informs parents regularly about pupils' progress and when new targets for improvement have been set so that they can support learning at home.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The acting headteacher has been highly effective in distributing more responsibility for reviewing school effectiveness and analysing data to subject coordinators, who are now clear about their roles and relishing the increased accountability. There are detailed and appropriate priorities to effect further improvements in teaching and the curriculum. The school knows itself well and plans for improvement are clearly delineated in the school development plan which is monitored regularly and to which all staff, stakeholders and governors contribute. There is a well organised programme of continuing professional development which uses the skills of staff in school to share expertise, as well as working closely with the local authority to advance school improvement. The school is

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proud of its inclusive nature and has close links with outside agencies to support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds and those with medical needs, showing the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. The school's excellent relationship with parents and carers greatly benefits pupils' learning. Governors have worked closely with the local authority to bring the school successfully through a difficult time. They offer strong support and have now become more rigorous in offering challenge to the school and in monitoring its work. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and there are outstanding procedures to ensure their safety. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It is very clear about its place at the heart of the local community and is determined that pupils realise their place as global citizens.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children start in the Reception classes with skills and personal attributes that are typical for their age, although some aspects of numeracy are more advanced. By the time children start Year 1 attainment is above the level expected, and children who have thrived in the early years setting have developed strong dispositions and attitudes for learning. As a result of good teaching, children make rapid progress in learning letters and sounds, developing an interest in stories and acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills. Children behave well and quickly learn to share and work confidently together, especially in the Vet's surgery and in the greenhouse and garden shop. The Early Years



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Foundation Stage leader has a clear plan for future improvements and has already initiated changes which allow flexibility and opportunities for children to develop their independence, try new activities and move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. Children flourished exploring the patterns in snowflakes. Activities in the Reception classes are well planned. staff are very clear about what they expect children to learn, and have detailed records to assess their learning. Adults work well together to provide a welcoming, safe and secure learning environment. While parents are well informed about children's progress, opportunities are missed to share these records with them.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

A total of 55 parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and analysis showed that support for the school is very strong. All parents and carers support the work of the school and the way it helps pupils to feel safe and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the acting headteacher and the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. However, a few indicated that they believed the school could give more information about pupils' progress. Inspectors do not agree that this is an area for improvement. A few parents also expressed concern about the temporary nature of the acting headteacher's appointment. Inspectors believe that the governors have the expertise to appoint a suitable headteacher to the school.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shotley Bridge Infants' School 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 inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 111 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	36	28	51	4	7	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	47	24	44	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	53	24	44	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	49	23	42	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	45	29	53	1	2	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)	19	35	26	47	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	42	30	55	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	45	28	51	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	33	32	58	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	47	24	44	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	55	23	42	1	2	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



3 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shotley Bridge Infant School, Consett, DH8 0SQ

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school recently.

You go to a good school which has many outstanding features – the best of which is you! The team was impressed by the pride you take in your work, how hard you work in lessons, your writing and your information and communication technology skills. We really enjoyed your assembly about setting goals. You behave very, very well, show great respect for one another and look after one another admirably. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. Your parents and carers like the school very much. Your teachers try hard to make your lessons fun. All staff care for you extremely well. Teachers help you learn well and tell you clearly how to improve your work. They also know what to do to make the school even better.

I have asked your teachers to do the following things to make your school even better:

- give you even more chances to learn and practise your skills through exciting activities
  - make sure that appropriate tasks are given to those of you who are ready to do harder work
  - help you to learn more about the people from different cultures who live in Britain.
- You can help by continuing to do your best and by continuing your excellent attendance. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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