

Shalford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114844
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338464
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Nichola Perry

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Peak
Headteacher	Mrs Kate Ward
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2006
School address	Church End Shalford Braintree
Telephone number	01371 850336
Fax number	01371 851284
Email address	admin@shalford.essex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. All four teachers and one teaching assistant were observed in eight sessions. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the inclusion leader, subject leaders, the chair of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work and displays, and at documentation, including the school development plan, the self-evaluation form, assessments, records of progress, teachers' planning, and documents about safeguarding and welfare arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised 41 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- the effect of the school's self-evaluation and whether assessment and monitoring arrangements are helping to raise attainment for all pupils
- whether teaching is providing sufficient challenge for all pupils and the quality of teachers' feedback so that pupils are clear about how they can improve
- whether the curriculum is sufficiently motivating for all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school which serves the village of Shalford and surrounding villages. The numbers in each year group vary greatly from year to year. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and very few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is higher than found nationally. A significant proportion of these pupils have considerable emotional problems. Through the local cluster of schools, pupils have access to additional provision including a range of sporting events and workshops for more able learners.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced significant disruption to the school leadership and teaching staff. Also, as a result of lower numbers on roll, the school is having to face a reduction in staffing which is causing further disruption.

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

Shalford is a satisfactory and improving school. It has some good features. The quality of care, guidance and support is a strength so that pupils in all groups are really valued and treated as individuals. Behaviour is good and nearly all pupils attend school regularly. Relationships are good. Pupils are extremely polite, get on well with each other and take pleasure in their own and each other's achievements. They are thoughtful towards people who are different from themselves, or less fortunate, and make a significant contribution to the school and local communities. Pupils demonstrate a clear appreciation of how to keep safe and how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, recognising the need for a balanced diet and plenty of exercise. The relatively new headteacher has worked extremely hard, along with newly appointed staff, to improve all aspects of pupils' personal and emotional development and their learning. Governors are well informed, effectively led and provide good support and challenge to the school. Good relationships exist between the school and its parents and carers. One parent's comments summarised the views, including those of the pupils, when saying, 'The headteacher is so approachable and friendly that you feel you can discuss anything with her. The school has really turned around since her appointment and I am incredibly lucky to be sending my child to such a wonderful school'.

Overall achievement is satisfactory and attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes better, with clear signs of improvement. Pupils of all abilities say that they enjoy learning. Most demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress because teaching for them is consistently effective. In-class support is satisfactory although, in some classes, it is better and contributes well to pupils' learning. Planning uses clear learning objectives so that pupils know what skills they are expected to learn. Ongoing feedback in lessons is often effective in motivating pupils to try their best, informing pupils how well they are doing and how to improve. Assessment information is plentiful. However, it is not yet fully understood. This means that teachers are not setting targets which ensure better than expected progress every year. It is clear from looking at planning and pupils' work that teachers' grasp of national curriculum levels, and how these can be used to raise expectations of what of pupils in specific age groups can achieve, is inconsistent.

The satisfactory curriculum ensures basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are addressed appropriately. However, writing skills are not being developed fully in all subjects so as to bring about necessary improvement. The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal development. Self-confidence is very well-developed and pupils, from an early age, are keen to share their ideas and views because they know what they have to

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say is highly valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is given high priority throughout the school.

The headteacher and governors are successfully driving improvements because self-evaluation is accurate and development planning supports identified priorities well. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. However, the school has been through a period of significant turbulence which leaders have had to manage as a priority. Staffing has been stable this year and teaching has improved significantly so that underachievement has been halted and attainment has risen. Although the new members of the leadership group have yet to develop their skills as leaders, they work well as a team. Together with the improving rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics, this demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate at which all pupils make progress by:
 - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that it is consistent in all classes
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils in all year groups can do and setting more challenging targets which are geared to promoting faster progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in a wide range of contexts
 - developing the leadership skills of all senior staff so that they acquire an accurate understanding of the quality of provision and standards in their areas
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress from their starting points. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average overall, although results have been erratic year on year. The school has worked extremely hard to successfully address underachievement in all subjects. As a result of high expectations and consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in the oldest class, current Year 6 pupils have made rapid progress this year. In this class regular use of 'talk partners' has helped pupils to develop their use of language along with their self-confidence, leading to greatly improved writing. However, assessments and work seen during the inspection show attainment is unlikely to maintain the 2009 levels. This is because over half of the pupils have special educational needs and find learning difficult. In the current Year 5, the same consistently good teaching is also leading to an improving trend, indicating sustained improvement in pupils' progress. Already assessments are showing that attainment levels have risen. In other classes progress is starting to improve, but remains inconsistent.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 has also been erratic, but is average overall.

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Assessments and work seen during the inspection show that attainment in Year 2 is unlikely to maintain previous levels because two out of the five pupils in the year group have special educational needs.

In lessons, there is no difference between any groups' performance. School assessments and tracking documents show that additional sessions to help those who find learning difficult have been very successful in improving rates of progress and raising attainment.

Pupils behave well, form strong relationships with adults and learn to value everyone effectively. Pupils contribute to the community well. They love looking after younger pupils on the playground and are always ready to arbitrate in difficult situations. Their enterprise awareness is developing well through collectively working to make a saleable product and using the profit from their £10 budget to re-invest. The school council is effective in suggesting improvements to the school and selects a range of national and international charities to support each year. The satisfactory progress pupils are making in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and their well developed personal skills mean they are being appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Improvements in teaching are leading to greater progress in pupils' learning and development, although some inconsistencies remain. Teachers employ increasingly imaginative teaching styles to motivate pupils, for example, when younger pupils act out positions taken by world cup footballers and discuss what it is they are saying to each other, leading to more interesting writing. Teachers are beginning to use questioning astutely to support or challenge learners. More focused teaching on developing pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills across the school is leading to significant improvement in pupils' progress and attainment, most notably in Years 3 to 6.

Particularly good emphasis on speaking and listening, and on opportunities for play and drama in all year groups, is contributing well to pupils' good personal development. Teachers use assessment satisfactorily on a day to day basis to ensure planned lessons match individual needs. Marking is regular and positive although it does not always provide pupils with enough information on how they can improve their work.

The re-designed curriculum is helping pupils to learn more effectively. Although it now provides increased opportunities for developing pupils' creative skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world, pupils are not given enough chance to practise their basic skills, particularly their writing, in other subjects. Displays of pupils' work and those which support their learning are developing well. An appropriate range of additional activities enrich the curriculum. Good use is made of the local and wider communities to extend pupils' learning, such as the opportunity to convert a local plot of land into a wildlife area within a new housing development.

Pupils' pastoral needs are met effectively from the day they start school. Induction into the school is effective, as is that into secondary schools. The contribution made by provision for the emotional development of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, has been particularly effective in improving their rates of progress and attainment. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school because expectations are clear and consistently applied. Parents and carers are well informed and involved. This means that they can access the necessary support, so that they can help their children's social and emotional needs, as well as their learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher is increasingly ensuring that all pupils develop their full potential in all aspects of their social, emotional and academic development. She has created an environment where all pupils can thrive. Although recent significant staffing issues have had a major impact on such a small school, staff and governors have successfully continued to make improvements. Development planning focuses on breaking down barriers to learning and pupils' progress is carefully tracked so that all have equal opportunities to learn and achieve. Subject leaders, all of whom are new to the role, work well together. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of their subjects, although it is too soon to see any significant impact on attainment. Rigorous monitoring of teaching ensures that none is inadequate.

Governors know the school well and are effectively involved in planning for the future. They ensure that all safeguarding and child protection procedures and training meet requirements fully and that systematic records of staffing checks are maintained.

Leadership ensures wide-reaching links within the local and wider communities. Pupils show good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of the United Kingdom and speak knowledgeably about religions, faiths and cultures which are different to their own. They learn about diversity through involvement in a wide range of celebrations from other faiths, such as Eid and Diwali, as well as those within their own culture. Pupils' awareness of the wider world is still developing. Links have been established in India but these are at an early stage of development.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Provision and leadership are satisfactory overall. Children generally enter school with knowledge and understanding broadly in line with the expectations for their age. Good relationships are established with children and their families, so that children settle quickly and become happy, confident and independent learners. The satisfactory curriculum covers all areas of learning and the learning environment is stimulating and appropriately resourced. There is satisfactory balance between the inside and outdoor curriculum; the outdoor activities are greatly enjoyed by the children and contribute well to their good personal development. Appropriate emphasis is placed on learning through practical activities, and there is an increasing focus on developing children's thinking and imaginative skills. Activities, including those outside, provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their own learning and development. Children are taught basic skills, such as letter sounds, reading and writing. They make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Standards vary from year to year but overall are broadly average by the time they enter Year 1 so that they have a sound base for their future learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. However, learning opportunities are missed when adults do not model what it is they want children to learn. Staff know children well and increasingly take account of their interests when planning work. Overall behaviour is good and most routines are secure, except when some children continue to call out inappropriately during whole class sessions.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just under half of the parents and carers returned a questionnaire. Analysis shows high levels of satisfaction with what the school provides for their children. Among those parents who returned a questionnaire, there was total unanimity regarding the safety of their children and that they are taught how to develop healthy lifestyles. The overwhelming majority are positive about all other aspects of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shalford Primary 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	66	13	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	73	11	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	41	21	51	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	32	24	59	4	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	39	24	59	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	44	21	51	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	49	21	51	0	0	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)	14	34	22	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	41	20	49	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	46	21	51	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	32	24	59	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	44	20	49	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	54	17	41	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



25 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shalford Primary School, Baintree, CM7 5EZ

The other inspector and I really enjoyed visiting your school and talking to lots of you during our recent inspection. Thank you very much for helping us find out about your school. We think your school is a really happy and friendly place to go to every day. It provides you with a satisfactory education. There are lots of good things about it.

You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good.

You all try hard and make satisfactory progress in your work.

You behave really well.

Your headteacher and governors have good ideas about how to improve your school.

All the adults care about you and support you well. They listen to you so that you feel very safe in school.

Your school gets on well with your parents and other people who can help you learn.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things they should do are.

Make sure that the teaching gets even better in all classes.

Provide lots more opportunities to practise your writing.

Make sure that your teachers really know what you can do in lessons and that your learning targets help you to make faster progress.

Ensure all the senior teachers learn more about how they can improve your learning further.

You can help by continuing to come to school every day, listening carefully to your teachers and enjoying all the super things that you are learning at school.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Perry

Lead inspector

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