

# Shears Green Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118265
<b>Local Authority</b>	kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339176
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Simmons

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>	Infant
<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>	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gary Reading
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Packham Road Northfleet Kent DA11 7JF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included close to 10 hours of inspectors' time during which they looked directly at pupils' learning. All 13 teachers were observed as part of the 18 lessons/part-lessons observed; this included a sample of special support groups. Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and evaluated their progress using the school's assessment information. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation including the school's improvement planning and the local authority information about the effectiveness of the school. Inspectors looked at the leaders' records about the quality of the lessons. In total, 143 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed.

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

- evidence of improving attainment for pupils currently in the school in reading writing and mathematics, especially for White British pupils
- the accuracy of leaders' evaluations of the work of the school; especially in evaluating teaching, learning and pupils' progress
- how well pupils currently in the school make progress
- the effectiveness of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of support given to vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational and/or disabilities to ensure that they overcome barriers to learning.

## Information about the school

This is a very large and oversubscribed infant school. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage in one of the four Reception classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but a few come from other backgrounds, the largest groups being those of Asian or Black African heritage. A higher than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or learning disabilities. Pupils' specific special educational needs most often relate to communication and moderate learning difficulties. A few have behaviour and emotional problems or autistic spectrum disorders.

**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**

**2**

### Main findings

Shears Green Infant School is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy all that the school has to offer. The headteacher, her deputy, governors and staff work very well together. Teaching and learning are good. Staff are proud to be working with the children and have high aspirations for them. Relationships with pupils are outstanding and there is a strong partnership with parents, carers and other professionals which help children to feel happy and well cared for. Community cohesion is good. Pupils show respect, behave well and help others. Pupils are helped to have an outstanding understanding of how to be safe in the world around them.

Pupils' attainment over the last three years by the end of Year 2 has been significantly lower than average. This is why attainment is judged to be low overall. However, inspectors found substantial evidence to show that standards are rising for children currently in the school in all year groups. Attainment is securely on track to be at the expected level by the summer of 2010. This is due to good teaching and learning, and pupils' good progress from their often lower than expected starting points.

Leaders' evaluations of the work of the school, including those about teaching, learning and pupils' progress, are accurate and help teachers in developing their practice. Leaders know what is needed to improve standards and teaching. As a result of their development planning and actions, standards have risen well for children currently in the school. Teaching and learning have improved and good extra support groups such as 'Reading Recovery' and 'Numbers Count' help pupils to make good progress. The appointment of more teaching assistants has positively enhanced the care and guidance given to pupils.

The school has a good capacity to continue improving based on the actions taken. Leaders have focused well on developing pupils' speaking, reading, mathematics, spelling and handwriting skills, where progress is consistently good. They know the aspects of writing that still need to be improved, especially so that pupils write more frequently, do more extended writing and learn how to edit and improve their work. There are also missed opportunities to enliven pupils' ideas for writing by using drama in lessons.

Assessment procedures are well developed and contribute much to helping pupils to make good progress in their lessons and over time, but there is some inconsistency in teachers' skills and accuracy in assessing children's skills and knowledge on entry to the Reception class. Staff are correctly keen to improve this so that progress in the Reception class can be measured more precisely.

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

- Ensure that the school continues to improve attainment, especially in writing by:
  - giving children in all year groups more frequent opportunities to write
  - providing more opportunities for older pupils, or those who are ready, to do extended pieces of writing
  - helping pupils to write for meaningful and exciting purposes by doing more drama in lessons; so that pupils use adventurous words and sentences and develop good ideas for their own writing.
- Make sure that that leaders and staff are fully accurate and consistent in assessing children's skills and knowledge when they start school in the Reception classes by
  - working together to develop teachers' knowledge of different levels of attainment so that expectations are consistent in all four classes.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils are keen to learn. Improvements in children's skills at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, over the last three years, give a firm basis for further good learning in Years 1 and 2. The effective development of reading, writing, mathematics, spelling and handwriting means that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and that they are suitably prepared overall for their future economic well-being. This includes pupils from White British backgrounds, who in previous years had not done as well as other groups in the school. Pupils with special educational and/or disabilities are well supported, and this helps them to learn well and make good progress.

Pupils' learning and enjoyment are good overall. For example, as seen when pupils composed music and created imaginative collages to go with the story of 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. Basic skills are developing well overall, as evident in their good progress, but there is still more to do to improve their writing. This has started with work on a story called 'What's in a Box', where pupils have built up and extended their ideas and keenly edited and improved their work with the help of their teacher. However, in the school as a whole, pupils are not doing enough of this kind of work.

Overall, pupils quickly develop confidence, self-esteem and concentration. Pupils' behaviour is good and they know much about how to be safe. For example, about how to get help of adults if they should ever encounter bullies, which is very rare. They showed excellent awareness of how to be safe in the snow and ice and how to be safe with equipment in lessons. They know simple facts about different cultures and religions and enjoy religious education, art and physical education. They raise considerable funds for different charities, recycle, and care for the garden at the local library. School councillors enthusiastically take on responsibilities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons thoroughly for pupils' differing needs and capabilities. They have high expectations, and good overall knowledge about how to assess pupils' skills and plan the next steps of their learning. Teachers help pupils to show their initiative. Occasionally, there is exemplary practice, as seen in a Year 1 class when pupils used 'task cards' which gave them exciting and challenging things to do independently. Links with different agencies, together with the support given by assistants and the family liaison officer, help to ensure that pupils are well cared for; especially those who are vulnerable and those with special educational and/or disabilities. Teachers place a strong emphasis on discussion work and this has been a focus of curriculum development, as many pupils need a lot of help with this. As yet, there is not enough drama to help pupils to use descriptive, 'wow' words and more complex sentences. Good teaching is aided by the interventions in the special support groups for 'Numbers Count' and 'Reading Recovery'. Teachers have improved mathematics since the last inspection, so that they help pupils to use their basic skills to solve real life mathematical problems. In a lesson seen, pupils in Year 2 confidently subtracted two digit numbers such as 33-12 and when doing this, they were helped to explain each step of their thinking clearly as they did the calculations. In reading, the effective teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) helps pupils to use accurate strategies to read and spell. Pupils benefit from additional activities and receive a well-rounded curriculum overall, but they

<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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recognise that the ranges of books that entice boys to read are underdeveloped.

*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>2</b>

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her staff know the pupils well and safeguarding and care procedures are good. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well overall. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational and/or disabilities are fully involved in the life of the school and make good progress. They have taken action to help White British pupils to do as well as other ethnic groups in the school in the future. Leaders, at all levels, share responsibilities well and have developed a good system for monitoring teaching and checking pupils' progress overall, although they rightly want to strengthen this still further in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, there has been a rigorous focus on improving teaching and learning, which is at the core of improving attainment for children who are currently in the school.

Governors are well trained and have high expectations. They work very closely with staff and parents and carers to ensure that everyone has a say on the development plans. Good community cohesion is evident in the way that the school helps the local community to work together. There is a thriving parents' association and strong links with other local groups. The school works with a school in France and multicultural work is developed well to help promote social awareness and respect for the culture and faith of others. Leaders evaluate this work carefully and have recently appointed a new governor to ensure ethnic diversity within the governing body.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<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>2</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of provision and outcomes for children are satisfactory overall. Relationships are excellent and staff are very caring, which means that children settle in happily and quickly. As a result of good leadership, the provision and outcomes for children have improved over the last three years. In particular, standards have risen from being exceptionally low at the end of the Reception Year to become average in 2009 in almost all areas of learning. Within this, children do well in developing their personal and social skills. In writing, standards and progress are lower than is usually expected and this remains an important aspect for development. Links with parents and carers have also increased and the accommodation has been extended. A children's centre is due to be opened on the site in February 2010.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Occasionally, in satisfactory sessions, there are missed opportunities to further extend learning through play and investigation. Adults help children to develop their speaking skills well through these and other activities, as seen when children were enjoying dressing up in the space shuttle, castle and baby clinic. Outside activities are well organised to help children to learn. For example, children had great fun retelling the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' while clambering over the bridge in the garden area. There is a suitable balance between free choice activities and adult-led activities, which reflects improvement in the curriculum.

Only a few of the 20 pre-schools that the children attend provide the required assessment information for the beginning of the Reception class, which hampers teachers in assessing children's attainment when they join the Reception classes. Added to this, some teachers are more skilled in assessing children's level of skills on entry than others.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are very positive about the school overall, especially the care given to their children and how their children enjoy attending. They think that the teaching is good and that their children make good progress; inspectors agree. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are well prepared for their future lives and that the school meets the particular needs of individual children. Almost all identified that the school is well led, which confirms the inspection findings. A few noted that the school does not inform them enough about their children's progress but inspectors note that the school has regular meetings about this and has an 'open door' policy for all parents and carers to come in at any time to discuss their child. Inspectors received many additional written comments. Parents and carers noted in particular the kind and supportive staff; the good care for children with special educational and/or disabilities; and the happy and friendly environment.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shears Green Infant 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 143 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	98	69	44	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	91	64	52	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	40	70	49	11	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	48	69	48	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	55	60	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	75	52	59	41	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	75	52	64	45	3	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)	62	43	62	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	70	49	71	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	41	75	52	3	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	37	81	57	5	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	78	55	61	43	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	90	63	52	36	1	1	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.**



15 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Shears Green Infant school, Northfleet, DA11 7JF

You may remember that three school inspectors visited your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we spoke to you. We are writing to tell you what we found during our visit.

You go to a school where most things are just right for you and there is not much for the adults to do to make it better still. We call this a satisfactory school. We are delighted that you enjoy learning and behave well. Well done for being kind and respectful, for doing things for others in your local area, and for helping people in other parts of the world. We agree with you and your parents and carers that you are looked after well and are happy at school. You get on very well with the adults. Most lessons are interesting and you are working hard to learn new things well. Your reading and mathematics are coming on especially well and we were pleased to see you working hard on your letters, sounds and handwriting; please keep this up! We thought that your writing about 'What's in the Box' and your work on the story of 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' were great. Some of you have extra help and this helps you to learn well. Your teachers and all of the adults want to do even better for you. We have asked them to do the following important things.

- Help you to write more often and learn how to check and improve your work so that you can write longer pieces. You should also do more drama and have more fun writing activities so that you can use more exciting words and longer sentences.
- Make sure that teachers in the Reception classes know exactly what new children can already do when they start school, especially by continuing to work closely with your pre schools to help them with this.

Keep eating healthily and doing lots of exercise. Always work as hard as you can. Well done for remembering so many excellent things about how to be safe.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector

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