

Sharples Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105162
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	395644
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Yvonne Mills-Clare

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shirley Buckley
Headteacher	A W Hemmings
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2005
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Introduction

Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare
Sheila Kaye

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 11 teachers leading 17 part-lessons. The work of the Visually Impaired Unit staff was also observed. The inspectors listened to pupils reading and meetings were held with the headteacher, teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, the school's local authority adviser and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, and scrutinised governing body minutes, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, the school development plan, safeguarding procedures, pupils' workbooks, and teachers' planning and marking. The inspectors took note of the questionnaires completed by 63 parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Sharples is an average sized primary school serving pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds. Just under half the pupils in school are from Asian Indian backgrounds, the largest other single group being of White British heritage. More than half the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There are fewer pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs than average. Most of these pupils have a visual impairment and are supported mainly in class by staff from the Visual Impairment Unit, which is part of the school building. The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. A daily breakfast club and after-school facilities are provided for pupils.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection and there has been significant staffing disruption over the last 18 months.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching they receive remain satisfactory over time in all key stages, except in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children make an excellent start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From generally below average starting points when children join the nursery, children make rapid progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, the majority are demonstrating skills that are above national expectations in most aspects of learning. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, variations in the quality of teaching mean that the progress pupils make is inconsistent. As a consequence, by the end of Year 6, attainment remains above average and progress for the majority of pupils is satisfactory.
- The leaders have implemented good systems to develop and support teaching, which have in part been successful. However, some elements of good practice are not used consistently. In some lessons, assessment is used well to match work to pupils' abilities, but in other lessons where intended learning is not clearly identified, work is not always set at a level that challenges all abilities.
- Pupils have good attitudes to and enjoy learning and their behaviour is good. Parents and carers unanimously state that their children feel safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe. They are proud of their school and are adamant that bullying in all its forms is rare.
- A turbulent period of staffing has been managed well. The management of performance is satisfactory. Senior leaders have been resolute in monitoring teaching, which is beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement. However, subject leaders are not in a position to make a full impact through

regular monitoring of the pupils' achievements. Meetings between leaders and staff are held regularly and staff are made accountable for pupils' progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and pupils' progress are at least good by:
 - consistently using assessment in day-to-day lesson planning to provide work that challenges all groups of pupils to do as well as they can
 - ensuring that teaching is always lively and varied to stimulate pupils' interest, and timed well so that skills can be practised and consolidated
 - using targets and marking consistently to better inform pupils of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - providing opportunities during and at the end of lessons to share ideas and demonstrate pupils' learning
 - informing pupils clearly about what they are expected to learn and developing questioning techniques to more effectively promote pupils' thinking skills and reflection.

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation activities by school leaders at all levels, are used effectively to impact as fully as possible on provision and pupils' outcomes by:
 - developing a greater focus on the monitoring and evaluating roles of subject leaders so that outcomes impact fully on whole-school improvement
 - rigorously and regularly monitoring the progress of the different groups of pupils and the impact of intervention strategies.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are generally engaged in their learning. They particularly enjoy opportunities for discussion during 'Rally Robins' and 'Babble Gabble' times. All parents and carers are positive about the progress their children are making in the school. Although this is true in parts of the school, too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that progress is not always built on from year-to-year, leading to satisfactory progress overall.

Children enter the nursery with skills that are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal development. As a result of well-planned activities built around children's own interests and effective interaction with the adults around them, children make rapid progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the start of Year 1, pupils' skills are above national expectations in most aspects of their learning. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been above average, particularly so this year, where more pupils seem set to attain the higher levels than in previous years. Following a strong focus on support to boost progress in reading and writing, initial figures indicate

differences in both attainment and progress between English and mathematics have almost been eradicated. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is above average. In lessons, most pupils read fluently and with understanding, and tackle unfamiliar words successfully by separating the parts of words and blending the sounds together. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils discussed books and the characters they particularly liked or disliked and articulated the reasons why.

Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers, although when supported in small groups and individually, by the capable team of teaching assistants their progress accelerates. Similarly, through calm and sensitive support in lessons by staff from the unit, pupils with visual impairments are able to access the curriculum and progress well in these situations.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who expressed an opinion feel that their children are well taught and their needs are met, and most pupils agree. Inspectors found the quality of teaching over time to be satisfactory. Routine monitoring by the school indicates teaching is improving as the school regains stability from the disruption that has occurred over the recent past. There are examples of good and better teaching across some classes and year groups, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but there is not yet enough consistently good and better teaching to ensure that pupils are able to build consistently on their prior achievement.

In all lessons, relationships between teachers and pupils and the adults who work with them are good. Pupils with special educational needs, benefit from focused teaching in class and also in small-group and individual sessions. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. Teachers make sure that pupils understand fully what they are expected to learn in lessons and give pupils clear individual targets to guide their learning. Tasks are engaging, often relate to real-life situations and also link to other subjects. Challenge is realistic and expectations high. Well-planned day-to-day tasks are based firmly on previous achievement ensuring progress is consistently good. Resources are used imaginatively and pupils work collaboratively. For example, in a good Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils worked together enthusiastically, mind mapping arguments for and against whether cars should be allowed in towns and cities. Skilful questioning developed pupils' thinking, and pauses in the lesson offered pupils the opportunity to share the work they had done. However, questioning such as this is not apparent in all classes.

Where teaching is satisfactory, tasks do not always match pupils' abilities and prior learning well enough. The pace of learning can be slow because teachers talk for too long and pupils are not actively engaged in learning. Teachers are often satisfied with the first answer a pupil may give, missing opportunities to involve others and develop pupils' thinking skills. Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning because the objective of the lesson is not easily understood and, at the end of the lesson, pupils are not given time to reflect on their work and demonstrate what they have learned. Teachers' marking and pupils' targets do not always focus sharply on next steps in learning.

Teaching, generally, has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly so in lessons where paired and group work is emphasised. Effective teaching of letters and the sounds among younger pupils and children, well-planned sessions for guided reading across the school, and a good range of reading books targeted to different levels of ability are developing pupils' pleasure and enjoyment in reading.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school. They demonstrate their pride in Sharples when they explain about the garden they tend and the home-grown vegetables they eat at lunchtimes. They thrive on praise and try in turn to please the teachers. They behave well in lessons and around school and are invariably courteous to visitors. Attendance is average and improving year on year. Pupils feel safe in the school. They learn about 'stranger danger' and how to use the internet safely. They value the visits from the police and the fire service. Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are well supported by the school. All parents and carers who completed the questionnaires are understandably positive in their view that their children are safe and happy. Typical comments are; 'We feel confident that she is safe and well cared for.' 'My son would go to school at the weekend if he could.' The school gives high priority to the physical and emotional well-being of its pupils. All the pupils with whom bullying was discussed were aware of the different types of bullying sometimes found in this age-group and were adamant that none occurred in the school. Their view is that most pupils behave well in the playground, maturely commenting '...we can't say never, because everyone has an off day'. However, they are confident that if anything untoward occurs it is tackled rapidly and effectively by staff.

Leadership and management

A period of turbulence in staffing has been managed well by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the well-informed, supportive, governing body. Throughout this period, leaders have focused on managing and monitoring the performance of staff and the quality of teaching. School documentation shows that, while inconsistencies in quality remain, through regular monitoring, training and continuous professional development, the proportion of good or better lessons has increased over the past year. Strengths and development points are shared and form a basis for future lesson observations. Improved systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress identify potential underachievement more quickly and teachers are held firmly to account for pupils' progress through regular meetings. Tracking of pupils' progress is analysed regularly for several groups of pupils, for example, classes, year groups, boys and girls. However, it does not routinely check progress for other groups, or measure and evaluate the impact of support and intervention programmes for the pupils involved. Subject leaders monitor and evaluate their subjects, however, currently the regularity and rigour of this monitoring is limited and so the impact they have had on whole-school improvement is restricted. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and clearly identifies the areas for improvement.

Through programmes of study for personal, social and religious education, the curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development and promotes a caring, racially-harmonious community. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with opportunities to take part in music, drama, dance and art. Other subjects are increasingly linked to literacy, although opportunities for information and communication technology are more limited. A strong focus on writing, particularly aimed at boys, has closed the gap successfully between the performance of English and that of mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils' attendance is rising and the accuracy of assessment is more secure across the school. The capacity to improve further is demonstrated in these achievements. The school is an inclusive community which promotes equality of opportunity successfully and which rejects discrimination in all its forms. Safeguarding and child protection policies and practice are reviewed on a regular basis and meet current government requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sharples Primary School, Bolton, BL1 8RX

May I start by saying what a delightful time my colleague and I had when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to see the beautiful art work and the colourful displays all around your school. We found that the children in nursery and reception have an excellent start to their time in school. You behave well and really care about each other. You are kind and helpful to all adults and visitors.

Yours is a satisfactory school. That means you make the progress that you are expected to make by the time you leave in Year 6, this is because the quality of teaching you receive is satisfactory. The headteacher and all the staff want the school to get better. Part of my job is to suggest ways that may help them do this.

We listened carefully to what you told us and have suggested some ways that your teachers can help you enjoy your lessons even more. We have asked the teachers to use what they know about how well you work to plan exciting tasks that make you think and where you can work together. We have asked them to make your 'WALT' easy for all of you to understand and for them to tell you how well you are doing and how to improve. Your targets and the teachers' marking can help you to do this. You love to share your ideas so we have asked the teachers to plan time during the lesson and at the end to ask you questions that make you think and give you the chance to share your learning with everyone.

We have also asked that the leaders in school check on all the different groups of pupils so they know how well each group is doing and if the support they are getting is really working. We are asking the staff who are responsible for different subjects, to watch your lessons and look at your books more often to check how well you are learning.

It was a real pleasure to meet you all. Good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Mills-Clare
Lead Inspector

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