

Shotley Community Primary School

Main Road, Shotley, Ipswich, IP9 1NR

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Progress throughout the school is good. It has improved because pupils respond positively to the good teaching.
- Information about pupils' progress is used very effectively. Relative weaknesses, such as in punctuation, have been identified and are being addressed through good teaching.
- Children settle quickly in Reception and make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because they get the help they need.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils love learning. One said, 'Our teacher teaches us in a way everyone understands, and it is fun so we take it in.'
- Parents are very positive about the school. They agree that their children feel safe in school and that staff care for them well.
- Attractive displays of a wide range of pupils' high-quality art enliven rooms and corridors.
- The headteacher and governors have improved teaching and learning well since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, teaching assistants are not given clear instructions about what they are expected to do.
- More-able pupils learn too little in some whole-class sessions.
- Subject leaders do not check regularly that pupils learn well throughout the school, and so do not always know where change is needed.
- Changes made to subjects are not checked to make sure that staff apply them consistently.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector sampled eight lessons. Most were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and direct communications from parents. The responses to 15 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school shares the site and building with an independently managed pre-school. This is inspected and reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - deploying additional adults more effectively when the whole class is working together
 - ensuring that more-able pupils are working at the right level and do not spend time on work where they already know the answer.
- Improve the leadership and management of subjects so that subject leaders:
 - more regularly and routinely check on the quality of learning and standards in their subjects, and use that information to make changes when necessary
 - check that improvements already agreed are understood and implemented by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in Reception with skills and experiences that vary greatly year to year. This year, they are a little below those typical for their age.
- Progress in Reception is good. Purposeful activities mean no time is wasted. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Children do well because they are curious and eager to learn.
- Progress through the rest of the school has improved over the last two years and is good. It has become more consistent because teaching is better, and the quality of teaching is checked more than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Progress in reading has improved from last year, when few Year 1 pupils reached the required level in the national screening for phonics (how letters link to the sounds they represent). This year, the proportion of Year 1 pupils on target to reach or exceed the level expected is similar to last year's national figure. The improvement is because pupils' understanding of phonics is better; they are taught more effectively as they learn with others of similar ability rather than similar age.
- Progress in mathematics has improved because extra staffing means pupils from Years 3 to 6 are taught in smaller groups and have more immediate contact with the teacher if they do not understand anything. This is particularly helping the more able to learn at a faster pace. This is another improvement since the previous inspection.
- Progress in writing has improved because the school identified important gaps in pupils' skills, and took effective action to improve them. Pupils speak about how the short daily sessions build their understanding: 'Every morning we have a grammar activity. I write it in my book, take it home and use it to revise.'
- Pupils also speak of the positive impact of all writing being in the same book. They say that they use their writing targets no matter what subject they write about, and staff have 'joined the dots' for them so they see writing in its wider context, not just something they do in English lessons. One said, 'It makes me think about my work and try to include these elements of writing in my work, whatever subject.'
- There are not enough pupils in each age group known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Last year, the vast majority made good progress and generally closed the gap in attainment between them and their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because their needs are met, often by skilled teaching assistants in sessions tailored to their specific learning needs.
- More-able pupils generally do well but, at times, these pupils do not make enough progress, for example, when they are being taught skills, knowledge and techniques that they have already mastered.

The quality of teaching is good

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are the foundation for effective teaching and learning. One pupil said, 'I used to worry. I wasn't very confident. Now I'm better. The teacher tells us all she wants is that we take part in the lesson and try our best, so I don't worry so much.'
- Pupils acknowledge how much they can help one another, and learn from each other. One said, 'No-one is perfect. We all try to help one another.'
- Pupils say their learning benefits from the prompts displayed around their classrooms, to use if they are not sure. 'Every wall has things on it to help us,' was a typical comment.
- Marking is helping to accelerate pupils' achievement. Pupils look forward to getting their work back. One said, 'Our teacher always gives us pointers, so we know what to do next time.' However, when the inspector looked at their books with pupils, none could point out how this improved their work next time. They agreed this was often because the next piece of writing was of a different type, so the marking was not relevant. The subject leader has devised a plan to overcome this but, because subject leadership is relatively weak, this has not been implemented.
- Sometimes, teachers talk about work to pupils who have a very wide range of ability. At these times, work is too easy for the more-able pupils, who often know the answer already.
- Additional adults are very effective when given a clear task to do, such as in the Reception class, where they know what the teacher expects and how to achieve it. Elsewhere, particularly when the teacher is talking to the whole class, they can be left with no clear direction or role in learning.
- In the younger classes, pupils develop well their ability to judge how they are doing, for example, by deciding whether they have met the lesson's criteria for success. This increases their motivation and helps them to correct their mistakes and so make better progress. However, teachers do not help pupils to refine these skills as they get older.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is the case in the classroom, around the school and in the grounds. Pupils care for, and about, their school and look out for one another.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are particularly strong. They themselves make a very clear link between trying hard and doing well, so they persevere even when tasks are difficult.
- Good habits of behaviour are learnt in Reception, where there is a consistent firmness from all staff and a clear expectation that children will do as they are asked.
- The school is a very happy community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In an assembly celebrating World Book Day, pupils responded respectfully and maturely when staff entertained them with an impromptu play.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Good guidance means pupils understand how to stay safe when using the internet.

- Staff know their pupils well because most spend two years with the same pupils and build very positive relationships. Where teaching is particularly strong, such as in Year 6, pupils say, 'Since we came up we have come a long way.'
- The school has been firm in applying attendance procedures so that previously low attendance is much improved and, for the current year, attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders know what the school needs to do to improve. They use information about pupils' progress particularly effectively to check all are doing well, and to make changes if they are not. In this and other important areas, the local authority 'challenge partner' is of great benefit to the school.
- Links with other professionals are used very effectively. To raise the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching very high levels, their teacher works closely with a teacher of high-attaining similar-age pupils from another school. Teaching assistants receive fortnightly guidance and coaching from specialists in areas such as speech and language.
- School leaders say they have 'dropped the ball' with regard to subject leadership. As a result, subject leaders do not know what is happening in their subject in other classes and cannot, therefore, see what needs improving. Changes in practice which are agreed are not regularly checked to ensure that everyone understands and implements them consistently.
- Pupils say they enjoy the interesting and varied curriculum, and the way visits and visitors often bring aspects of learning to life.
- Primary school sports funding is used well. Pupils like being energetic in the wider range of activities, led by specialist coaches. This improves their well-being. Staff work alongside these specialists so they learn, too.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection were full of praise for the school. The school offers parents opportunities to find out about subjects and how they can support homework.
- Useful links with local schools mean pupils can work and play with a wider group. This eases their transition to high school because they know more of their fellow pupils when they arrive. Staff benefit from talking to colleagues at other schools about similar challenges, for example, how best to organise work for pupils in mixed-age classes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know their school well because they use the data about how the school and its pupils are doing to question staff and make sure that the school continues to improve. They know how the pupil premium funds are spent, and how eligible pupils' learning has improved as a result. Most visit regularly and report back to fellow governors on what they have seen. They work well with the headteacher, for example, to put more adult support in the youngest class, where the greatest need is known to be. The governing body's pay policy links teachers' pay to performance. Governors know how teachers' performance is checked and they are resolute that underperformance would be tackled. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and state in forthright terms, 'Over the last few years we have learnt not to tolerate mediocrity.' The governing body ensures that all legal requirements are met, including for safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124606
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	430798

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	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Barnes
Headteacher	Melanie Newman
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2012
Telephone number	01473 787255
Fax number	01473 788788
Email address	admin@shotley.suffolk.sch.uk

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