



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Shellingford CE (Aided) Primary School**

**Oxfordshire Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 6 and 7 October 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Basic information about the school</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key issues</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Inspection findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standards achieved by the pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The quality of education</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Implementation of the action plan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix – Information about the inspection</b>	<b>9</b>

## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	Shellingford CE (Aided) Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs F Craig
Address of school:	Church Street Shellingford Faringdon Oxfordshire SN7 7QA
Telephone:	01367 710301
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body at the above address
Chair of governors:	Mrs E Cracknell
Local education authority area:	Oxfordshire
Unique reference number:	123222
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr R Blatchford HMI
Dates of inspection:	6 and 7 October 2004

## Introduction

1. Shellingford CE (Aided) Primary School is located in a small village with relatively expensive housing, but this does not fully reflect the socio-economic circumstances of the pupils' families. Only three of the pupils live in the village area, while the rest live further afield. The school is very small when compared with other primary schools, with just 24 pupils in the two classes. There are equal numbers of boys and girls. All the pupils are of white ethnic heritage and all have English as their first language. The proportion of the pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average; the percentage of the school roll identified as having special educational needs is below the national average. No pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in January 2004.

2. The school was inspected in December 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of December 2003.

4. In October 2004, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of December 2003.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- the unvalidated results in the end-of-Key Stage 1 national tests for 2004 for the four pupils in Year 2 show a good improvement in reading and writing at Level 2, and improvements at Level 3 in mathematics and science;
  - the unvalidated results of the 2004 tests for the seven pupils at Key Stage 2 indicate a significant improvement in the number of the pupils reaching Level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science. The number of the pupils reaching the higher Level 5 or above, has increased in English, mathematics and science;
  - the pupils make good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2;
  - the teaching was good or very good in all of the lessons. Lesson-planning and behaviour management were consistently good;
  - the quality of the pupils' learning was good or very good in all the lessons. The pupils knew what was expected of them and enjoyed their studies. With the small numbers of pupils in each of the two classes, the time given by the
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teachers to the pupils' individual learning needs is a significant factor in the consistently good learning;

- the pupils who have special educational needs made progress in lessons which was at least satisfactory and often good. The learning support assistants made well-judged contributions to the pupils' learning. The higher attainers in Key Stage 2 achieved well when there was specific provision to meet their needs, but in some lessons they were not fully challenged by the tasks and resources;
  - the curriculum at each key stage is suitably broad and balanced; schemes of work draw upon national and local guidance, appropriately tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. A broad programme of extracurricular activities is organised for the pupils by the staff, parents and governors;
  - assessment procedures are good. The pupils' progress, their attainment and their targets in the core subjects are well charted; marking in the pupils' books is regular and informative;
  - the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good, reflecting the school's very good provision; the pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The pupils are well cared for and supported by each other and by all of the staff;
  - the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good or very good in all of the lessons. Around the building and in the grounds, the pupils' behaviour was excellent;
  - the average attendance for the school year to date is 98.4 per cent, with no unauthorised absences. This figure is well above the national average for primary schools;
  - the school's relationships with its parents are good and are significantly improved since the inspection of December 2003; parental confidence in the school has been restored;
  - the leadership and management of the school have improved at all levels. The headteacher is providing leadership and management of a high quality, with excellent development of the school's ethos. The management skills of the subject and resources co-ordinators have developed since the inspection of December 2003 and they provide sound leadership in their areas of responsibility. However, these skills are relatively undeveloped and are not yet embedded in the day-to-day running of the school;
  - the work of the governing body is good, and it has worked hard to secure a balanced budget for this academic year. Governors are increasingly well informed about and practised in their role in monitoring the school;
  - the headteacher, staff and governors value the advice, training and guidance which have been provided by the local education authority (LEA) and the diocese in supporting leadership and management and in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
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## Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:
- continue to raise standards in the core subjects, particularly with the higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2;
  - develop the planning and monitoring role of the subject co-ordinators.

## Inspection findings

### Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The small numbers of pupils taking the national tests render invalid comparisons with schools nationally. However, the unvalidated results in the Key Stage 1 national tests for 2004 for the four pupils in Year 2 show a good improvement in reading and writing at Level 2, and improvements at Level 3 in mathematics and science, when compared with last year's results.
8. The unvalidated results of the 2004 tests for the seven pupils at Key Stage 2 indicate a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or above, in English, mathematics and science, when compared with last year's results. The number of the pupils reaching the higher Level 5 or above, has increased in English, mathematics and science.
9. The pupils enter the Foundation Stage of the school with attainment which is broadly average. The pupils express themselves confidently and make good progress.
10. Standards in lessons are rising and are satisfactory overall, with the pupils working at or above the levels expected for their age. The school has analysed in detail the 2003 and 2004 national test results and has set realistic targets for 2005 in both key stages.
11. Standards in English are in line with national expectations in both key stages. Most of the pupils, including the youngest, asked questions confidently and expressed themselves in well-formed sentences and with an expansive vocabulary. They listened with assurance. The pupils write accurately for their age and are aware of the conventions of grammar and punctuation; Year 2 pupils are beginning to join letters and Key Stage 2 pupils show a sound knowledge of spelling rules and how to apply them. Many of the pupils read aloud with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment; the pupils in Key Stage 1 were familiar with differences between fiction and non-fiction.
12. Standards in mathematics are in line with national age-related expectations. In the Foundation Stage the pupils recognised and ordered numbers. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the names and some properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good speed of recall with times-tables and are confident with units of measurement and their practical use. Higher attaining pupils switched between metric and imperial terms with ease and ready understanding.
13. Standards in information and communication technology are at least satisfactory, and are rising rapidly as a result of the staff's growing confidence. Key Stage 2 pupils were able
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to carry out research using the internet, combining a range of information from different sources to present to an audience. The pupils' use of the interactive whiteboard to reinforce their mental mathematics was confident and enthusiastic.

14. The pupils who have special educational needs make at least satisfactory, and often good progress, and the school's assessment data indicates that these pupils make good progress over time. The teachers and the learning support assistants have very good knowledge of these pupils' individual education plans, the targets that have been set and the particular strategies which have been identified for the pupils to make effective progress.

15. The higher attaining pupils respond well to tasks which capture their imagination and build skilfully on their previous knowledge; their oral contributions were invariably valued and built upon skilfully by the teacher. In the Key Stage 2 class, higher attaining pupils in mathematics were challenged to investigate the mathematical language of a fictional alien in order to enhance their own understanding of metric and imperial measurements. However, in this class which includes pupils from Year 3 to Year 6, certain activities and accompanying resources did not extend the more-able pupils.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

16. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons were consistently good or very good. High expectations from teaching, administrative and support staff are a hallmark of the school and from which the pupils take their lead. The pupils knew what was expected of them and they displayed independent and collaborative habits for learning from the moment they entered the classrooms. They handled resources and materials with respect; they observed the classroom rules, listened carefully when the teacher or another pupil was speaking and moved between different activities promptly. Encountering good and very good teaching, the pupils responded with enthusiasm to mental mathematics, spelling tests, reading aloud and in groups, and to stimulating writing assignments. The pupils in both classes were mutually supportive and frequently applauded one another's oral contributions in lessons.

17. Before school and at break times the pupils moved around the site with care and with courtesy towards one another and all staff. They treated their attractive surroundings with respect and particularly valued the new play facilities that have been installed. Most pupils, including the youngest in the Foundation Stage, spoke freely and positively about their school life.

18. The teachers and teaching assistants promoted good attitudes and behaviour in the way they treated and spoke with the pupils. The use of rewards and sanctions is understood by everyone; the pupils value the pupil of the week award and their individual medal points, which are charted on the classroom walls. The school council plays an important part in presenting the pupils' views to the headteacher.

19. Provision for the pupils' moral, cultural and social development is very good. Registration sessions were used thoughtfully to instil a strong group ethos and to boost self-esteem; the pupils were gently made aware of differences between right and wrong and the importance of valuing one another's feelings and talents. The school promotes an awareness of diverse faiths and cultural traditions through the curriculum and through involvement with a children's charity in Malawi. The staff organise a range of visiting artists, local visits into the community and residential experiences, which the pupils report as being among the highlights of the school year.

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20. Extensive opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development permeate the day-to-day planning and organisation of the school. The assembly was a powerful combination of song, prayer, parable and reflection, which inspired the pupils. In both key stages, the afternoon timetable for each day concludes with a short session in which the pupils reflect on their achievements and those of fellow pupils in an atmosphere of calm and genuine celebration. Clubs for cookery, gardening, recorders and sports are run by the staff, parents and governors, and contribute further to the strong sense of community which is a feature of the school's practice and vision.

21. The average attendance for the school year to date is 98.4 per cent, well above the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is equally good. There have been no exclusions of pupils this academic year.

### **The quality of education**

22. The quality of the teaching and learning has improved significantly since the inspection of December 2003. It was then described as unsatisfactory overall; it is now good overall. The teaching was good or very good in all of the lessons. The quality of teaching was rooted in the teachers' detailed knowledge of the individual pupils and in good classroom management. The planning for lessons was carefully shaped around the learning objectives and imaginative activities were skilfully orchestrated to maximise the pupils' learning and enjoyment. The teachers in both key stages adapted their planning to build on the pupils' prior learning and regularly drew to the attention of individual pupils what their specific targets were. The teachers harnessed a range of teaching techniques to bring out the best in every pupil; they used good questioning skills and when the pupils made mistakes the teachers sensitively turned those errors into positive learning opportunities. Time was generally well managed; however, there were occasions in the junior class when the wide range of ages and abilities meant that whole-class working became less effective, and the higher attaining pupils lost some motivation.

23. The classrooms offer a vibrant learning environment and the quality of display is high. The interactive whiteboard gives the pupils in the junior class plenty of opportunities to extend their literacy and numeracy work; by comparison, the potential of the small suite of computers has not been fully harnessed. The well-stocked library is attractively set out, but is not yet fully exploited by the pupils for their day-to-day enquiries across the curriculum; new textbooks in mathematics provide a welcome resource, marking a shift from a hitherto over-reliance on worksheets.

24. The quality of the pupils' learning was good or very good in all lessons. The pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and showed effective learning habits, whether working on their own, in groups or as a whole class. The infant class enjoyed reviewing new picture books while the junior class gave a spirited reading, complete with sound effects, of a play based on the story of Odysseus and the Sirens. Each day started with an early work session during which the pupils settled readily to a short writing or drawing activity that led into topics to be studied in greater depth during the day. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are strong because the teachers allow them time to think and make mistakes within a secure climate for learning.

25. The curriculum for the youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage is suitably based on the national guidance for pupils of this age; agreed learning priorities are shared with parents

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and the provision is sound. The pupils have settled well into the school's routines and happily take part in lessons alongside their classmates in Key Stage 1; they play a full part in collecting and tidying away their own books and materials. The teacher plans separately for the youngest pupils for parts of the lessons, and the teaching assistant gives them good support, effectively fostering their learning. However, the objectives for the lessons were sometimes not specific enough and did not say clearly what new learning the pupils will have experienced at the end of the lesson. The teacher targeted her questions carefully to individual pupils during whole-class parts of the lessons, but there were some occasions when the reception-age pupils were not fully engaged. The outdoor play area provides good opportunities for physical and creative development.

26. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is suitably broad and balanced. It is the product of an extensive revision over the last year. Links between subjects are meaningfully constructed and meticulously compiled documentation ensures that all staff are well informed about day-to-day lesson plans, subject policies, key objectives for teaching and learning and longer-term planning. Given the range of ages in each of the two classes, the school has rightly identified the need to review the organisation of topics and themes over a two to three year period.

27. Assessment was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The staff have worked assiduously to improve upon previous practice; there is a good range of assessment data. The school receives support from the LEA in diagnosing the pupils' individual learning needs, and the staff know the pupils' working levels in different subjects as well as their potential targets within each of the key stages. The tracking of the pupils' progress is very good. The school has rectified shortcomings in its practice of reporting to parents and procedures for homework are increasingly clear to the pupils and parents.

### **Leadership and management**

28. The headteacher has provided decisive leadership since taking up post in January 2004; her leadership is shaped by a strong commitment to the ethos of the church school. Her own teaching and open management style have built confidence at all levels, enabling the small team of teaching and support staff to harness their talents to improve the quality of learning and teaching for the pupils. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to ensure that policies and procedures are secure; she has acted on questionnaires from parents and the pupils to improve communications, the annual reporting system, the starting school pack and play facilities. Systems for performance management are in place.

29. The small team of subject and resources co-ordinators involves part-time teachers and learning support assistants. The headteacher has enabled this team to develop sound leadership skills in planning and monitoring the curriculum. However, these skills are relatively undeveloped and are not yet embedded in the day-to-day running of the school.

30. The inspection report of December 2003 records that in September 2003 there were 36 pupils attending the school and 13 pupils left during the autumn term, mainly because their parents were dissatisfied with the quality of education. Members of the local community and parents report that this decline has not only been arrested, but that parental confidence in the school has been fully restored. The school roll has stabilised; the school and governors report that planned admissions for 2005 and 2006 project an increase of the school roll to about 50 by September 2006.

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31. The governing body is supportive of the school and has grown in confidence in its evaluating and monitoring role; a committee structure operates efficiently. Individual governors are linked to different curriculum areas and there is a protocol for visiting and reporting on teaching and learning. The governing body has achieved a tightly balanced budget this financial year, supported by charitable donations. It is confident that the projected increase in the numbers of the pupils will enable sustainable budgets to be achieved in the coming years. Further training, including how to analyse national performance data, is planned so that the governors are better placed to hold the school to account.

32. The school's three-year strategic plan is well focused on sustaining the measurable improvements of recent months. There are clear plans for managing the potential growth in pupil numbers. The headteacher and governors are further preparing, in possible partnership with an independent provider, to offer extended day care for the pupils.

33. The school has been well supported by the LEA and diocese. The LEA's link adviser has worked constructively with the headteacher to monitor the school's progress and to identify staff training needs and provide appropriate courses. The LEA's September 2004 review of the school rightly identifies the need for the staff to observe best practice in other schools to improve further the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

34. The inspection report of December 2003 required the school to address five key issues. These related to: raising standards at the end of Year 6; improving the leadership and management; improving the quality of teaching for the junior pupils; ensuring that the pupils receive an appropriate curriculum in all subjects and year groups; improving the quality of assessment and its effective usage.

35. In the 2003 tests at Key Stage 2 the results were, overall, well below those of similar schools nationally. The 2004 unvalidated results show a significant improvement in the percentage of the school's pupils reaching Level 4 or above. The proportions reaching the higher level Level 5 or above, have increased in English, mathematics and science. The school has made good progress on this issue.

36. The measures taken by the headteacher and governors to improve leadership and management have been significant. The systems for self-evaluation and monitoring at all levels have been firmly established, and the school's capacity to improve further is good. The school has made good progress on this issue.

37. The quality of teaching for the junior pupils was consistently good or very good. The December 2003 inspection reported an air of apathy in lessons. This reluctance to learn has been replaced by a stimulating and purposeful classroom atmosphere, within which the pupils know that they are expected to learn and thrive on the progress that they are making. Progress on this issue has been good.

38. Following considerable revision of the curriculum, the programmes of study for the subjects now afford adequate time to give the pupils worthwhile learning experiences; the curriculum is broad and balanced in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress has been good on this issue.

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39. The school has significantly improved the quality of assessment and its usage; the staff are confident in their use of prior assessment data to set targets for the pupils. The teachers track the pupils' progress with rigour, diagnose strengths and weaknesses, and target teaching and resources accordingly. The older pupils are increasingly aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve their attainment. Good progress has been made on this issue.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in December 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

In October 2004, two HMI inspected the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Nine lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair and vice-chair of governors, the parish rector, the bursar, a nominated group of the pupils, a number of parents and governors, representatives from the LEA and the Oxford diocese, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of December 2004 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.