



# Shephalbury Park Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 135084  
**Local Authority** HERTFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 294266  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Derek Watts

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>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Burydale
<b>School category</b>	Community		Stevenage
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Herts SG2 8AX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 235454
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	187	<b>Fax number</b>	01438 235757
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Gardner
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Thackery and Mrs Gail Cropely
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Shephalbury Park Primary was formed in Sept 2005 after the amalgamation of Shephall Green Infant and Nursery and Burydale Junior schools. The whole school has only been on the present site since November 2006. This one form entry school is federated with the neighbouring two form entry primary. An acting headteacher works in partnership with the principal of the two schools. The previous headteacher of Shephalbury left in December 2006. The acting headteacher and principal are operating as co-heads of Shephalbury. Most pupils come from a White British background. Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language and very few are at an early stage of English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below expectations for their age. This is the school's first inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Shephalbury Park's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils' personal development is good and their academic achievement is satisfactory. The school has been well managed through the process of amalgamation. Parents hold positive views about the school and give it good support. The acting headteacher and principal, and the two assistant headteachers work well together and provide strong leadership and direction. Under their guidance and support, the roles of other leaders are developing well so that middle leaders are becoming more effectively involved in leading and monitoring their areas of responsibility. Teamwork is good and staff are keen to make the new school even better. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving.

Effective provision in Nursery and Reception mean that children make good gains in all areas of learning. They benefit from the new and well designed Foundation Stage facilities. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 to 6. Standards by Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Across the school, girls tend to perform better than the boys particularly in English. The school is aware of this difference and is adopting suitable strategies to increase boys' interest and motivation. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and improving. Effective monitoring and support by senior staff are contributing to these improvements. Teachers' instructions, demonstrations and questioning techniques promote learning well. Pupils make good progress when tasks are well matched to their abilities and time is maximised for learning. However, this is not always the case. In a few lessons, challenge and pace are not as high and learning slows. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the information gained is not used consistently well to set individual learning targets for pupils. The marking of pupils' work does not always provide clear guidance to help pupils improve. All teachers have good relationships with their class.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Good pastoral care and a positive school climate contribute well to pupils' good personal development. Pupils enjoy school and show a keen interest in the activities provided. Clear expectations and good relationships lead to good pupil behaviour. Pupils show a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and taking regular exercise. Older pupils readily take on additional responsibilities to help others in the school. Pupils participate well in the good range of additional activities, of which music and sport are strengths.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement and standards, particularly in English for boys.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and that lessons maintain a brisk pace.
- Strengthen the use of target setting and the marking of pupils' work in order to increase pupils' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children in Nursery and Reception make good progress. In Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 are broadly average. Throughout the school, girls tend to perform better than the boys, particularly in reading and writing. The school has identified this difference and is taking steps to rectify it. For example, by providing reading materials and writing tasks which are appealing to both boys and girls and increasing opportunities for pupils to apply and develop literacy skills in a range of subjects. Pupils are using information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning in a range of subjects. This approach successfully captures boys' interests. There is appropriate provision and support for the few pupils at an early stage of learning English, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. These pupils make sound progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. They are courteous, polite, and say that they really enjoy school. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

Pupils carry out a variety of responsibilities, and the school council has helped initiate improvements, for example, in providing fruit for all pupils and improving playground facilities. Pupils contribute to the wider community by raising funds for well known charities. The choir performs in the local community.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they benefit from the good opportunities provided by the school for regular exercise. They feel well looked after and adopt safe practices. The school successfully develops a range of personal skills such as confidence and independence. The satisfactory progress that pupils make in literacy and numeracy, prepares them adequately for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and ensure a positive climate for learning. Teachers' explanations, demonstrations and instructions are clear and informative, and promote learning well. Pupils are attentive and respond well to the teachers' questioning. Teaching and learning are more effective where tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and the lesson maintains a brisk pace. When this happens, pupils

are challenged, productive and make good gains in their learning. However, this good practice is not consistent. In a few lessons, tasks are not matched well to pupils' abilities and time is not maximised to promote learning, so that pupils are not challenged enough and the pace of learning slows. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and contribute well to pupils' progress, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work. Guidance to help pupils to improve is sometimes lacking and an overuse of praise such as 'excellent' can give pupils' the impression that the work is better than it is. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage. Children make good progress through an effective blend of direct teaching and allowing them to explore and work independently.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum promotes personal development well and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. The school is aware that it has been less successful in promoting high standards amongst boys, especially in English. However, it is currently improving the curriculum by developing links between subjects and thus providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills to other subjects. In particular, the school is exploring ways to tailor the curriculum to the needs of boys. There is good provision for ICT and this is used well to support teaching and learning.

Good attention is paid to pupils' healthy life-styles and personal safety. A wide range of outings, residential visits and clubs is well supported and contributes to pupils' enjoyment. In the Foundation Stage, a wide range of stimulating activities promotes children's learning well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with pastoral care being a major strength. Effective procedures ensure that pupils are safe and secure at school. Staff know the pupils well and are good role models for personal and social development. Pupils report that any problems are quickly sorted out by staff. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after. Pupils whose first language is not English receive appropriate support to ensure they have equal access to all activities. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment are satisfactory. Teachers' use of assessment to plan learning and set challenging individual learning targets is inconsistent. As a result, not all pupils are clear about what they are aiming for in order to improve their writing and mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management have successfully brought about a smooth amalgamation of the two schools. The acting headteacher and the principal, together with staff, have

created a positive and welcoming school climate. Leadership and management are promoting good personal development and satisfactory achievement of pupils.

Responsibilities among the staff have recently been shared effectively. The role of middle leaders is being developed so that they can be more effective in monitoring and developing their areas of responsibility. School self evaluation by the leadership team is thorough and accurate. Other staff are becoming more involved in this process. The school has a good overview of its performance. The findings of evaluation are used well to identify priorities for improvement such as raising achievement, improving teaching, developing consistency in assessment and extending the role of subject leaders. The federated partnership with the neighbouring primary school enables the sharing of leadership and teacher expertise which benefits both schools.

The governors are committed, supportive and have contributed well to the process of amalgamation. They are beginning to be more challenging about the quality of educational provision and achievement and standards. With strong leadership by the acting headteacher and principal, good teamwork and the successful completion of the amalgamation, the school is in a good position to bring about further improvements.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Shephalbury Park Primary School. Burydale, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 8AX.

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found out. Shephalbury Park is a satisfactory school and improving. Your two former schools have joined together well to form a new one.

These things are strengths of the school.

- The school has a positive and welcoming atmosphere.
- You clearly enjoy school and the activities offered.
- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- You behave well and you are friendly and polite.
- Facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) are good, and you use these well to support your learning.
- You get on very well with other pupils and adults.
- The staff know you well and you receive good care and support from them.
- You have a clear understanding of leading healthy lifestyles.
- Your parents are pleased with the school.

These are the things the school has been asked to improve.

- Some of you, particularly the boys, could make more progress and your teachers are working hard to make this happen.
- Sometimes your teachers could challenge you more and ensure that the lesson moves on at a good pace.
- Sharper learning targets and clear marking could help you make more progress.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead inspector