

Shelley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115020
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311793
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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 on roll	
School	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Gode
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Tye
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2002
School address	Milton Crescent Ongar Essex CM5 0FF
Telephone number	01277 362354
Fax number	01277 363302

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Inspection number	311793

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shelley is a smaller than average-sized school. It is situated in a socially disadvantaged area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number learn English as a second language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is twice the national average, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of children start school with a level of development that is well below national expectations. Many pupils, (over 75% in some year groups) arrive mid-term, or leave during the year. The school has been awarded the Sport England Activemark.

The school has emerged from a turbulent period. There have been four headteachers since the last inspection, and over three quarters of the teaching staff are new to the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It has reached a turning point after a period of change and adjustment. Staff morale is high and teachers share the clear vision of the headteacher about the steps they need to take to improve. They are motivated and keen to continue to build upon the developments of the last two years. The governors are pleased to see, in their regular visits to the school, 'happy children who enjoy learning.' There are good indications that the changes introduced by the headteacher, especially to the curriculum, are accelerating the progress pupils make. Taking these factors into account, alongside the continued good care for the pupils' welfare, the school shows a good capacity for further improvement.

Achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but improving at both key stages, although they are not yet good because the changes have not had time to take effect. The school's detailed assessment tracking systems show that pupils' progress is improving and that standards are beginning to rise. The high proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, and they too are beginning to make satisfactory progress. The school recognises that there is a weakness in the quality of pupils' writing, and acknowledges that although standards in mathematics are better than they were, they are not yet high enough.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but with many good features. The impact of teaching on achievement and standards is, at present, satisfactory. This is because the improvements to the teaching arrangements have not had long enough to take full effect although there are clear signs that this is beginning to happen. Teachers have correctly identified that they need to improve pupils' understanding of how well they are doing. This is to enable teachers to target work more accurately at a level that will challenge each pupil. The recent changes to the curriculum, to make it more creative and interesting, are promoting excitement among both teachers and pupils.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and value all that it provides for them. They feel safe and cared for. Pupils' behaviour is good and very well managed in the classrooms. The school council has an important role and is a positive influence on the improving attitudes and understanding of the pupils. Pupils have a good awareness of how their diet and the way they exercise can contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. The care and guidance of the pupils is good. One of the strengths of the school is the careful care and attention that staff pay to the individual needs of each pupil. This is particularly effective in supporting their social and emotional needs.

The headteacher provides clear and consistent leadership and is well respected by everyone. The headteacher, teachers and governors monitor the provision and the standards very rigorously. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Few children starting in Reception have any pre-school experience and their skills are very limited when they start school. Plans are nearing completion for the opening of a Children's Centre, plus new outdoor play area, to help the children when they arrive. Older pupils have an important role in helping the children to develop

their personal, social and emotional understanding; for example, by helping them at lunchtime and reading with them. This is enjoyable for everyone. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the provision is suitably managed. Children's achievements are monitored carefully to ensure that any difficulties are quickly identified and addressed. Few reach the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1, because they have so much catching up to do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics.
- Help pupils to understand how well they are doing so that staff can guide and challenge them more effectively in their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The children's skills, knowledge and understanding at the end of their Reception year are below national expectations but all make good progress from a very low starting point. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments show that, overall, standards are below those expected nationally and have been so over the last few years. However, recent assessments are showing that there are the first signs of better progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are also beginning to improve, whilst still remaining below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. The school has rightly identified raising achievement in mathematics and writing as being the key areas where standards need to increase the most.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy; they behave well in class and are enthusiastic about learning. The school has worked hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence by involving them in many events in and around their community. They respond to these opportunities with eagerness and enthusiasm. Despite being a small school, staff have consciously given the pupils many chances to take part in a range of different sports. Pupils' success in team games has helped to raise their awareness of their skills and talents. The ten-week sailing programme for Year 6 is helping develop their teamwork skills and heighten their awareness of safety matters. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school works hard to help children understand their own culture whilst enjoying the richness of the wider world through opportunities in music, drama and dance. Pupils show a good awareness of how they can keep healthy and safe.

Attendance is satisfactory and is monitored carefully. The school council are encouraging better punctuality by ringing a bell outside school to warn of the start to the day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with good features emerging in all classes. The headteacher has worked hard to encourage teachers to incorporate work which takes into account the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. The effectiveness of this work is apparent throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. The high quality of relationships is a major element of the pupils' improving progress. Teachers plan their work well and make clear to the pupils what it is they are learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used purposefully and to good effect. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and they have a good understanding of their achievements. There are still occasions when opportunities are missed to help the pupils get a better understanding of how well they are doing and where they need to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils and teachers are excited about the recent changes to the curriculum. The promising start that has been made to introducing the new 'creative curriculum' is clearly engaging the pupils' interest far more effectively than the previous approach. Year 6 pupils animatedly described how this system is making them work harder, but they are really enjoying what they do. For example, pupils explained how their magic show presentation to parents involved science, history and many other subjects. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are used thoughtfully to develop and support work in all subjects. The school is working towards accreditation for the ICT Mark. The extra-curricular activities the school provides successfully engage the pupils in a wide range of sports activities and have helped raise self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school manages the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very effectively. Everybody fits in well, whatever their social, emotional, physical or academic needs. Procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are all in place. The academic guidance for pupils is developing as target setting procedures improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a strong presence in and around the school. Pupils, parents, staff and governors recognise his clear vision and drive for school improvement. It is noticeable that he has already made a big difference to many aspects of the school. It is also clear that staff and the governors are working very hard to support him in raising standards. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is enabling them to work together and focus on those areas where there is the greatest need for change. Some developments, such as the introduction of staff with specific roles and responsibilities, are already helping to raise standards. However, others, including changes to teaching strategies, such as expanding the use of strategies to take better account of the wide range of ages and

abilities in each class, and the developing nature of the curriculum, have not been in place for long enough to measure their effectiveness.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

5 December 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Shelley Primary School, Ongar CM5 0FF

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit and would like to share with you what I found.

You go to a school which is improving in several areas. I was impressed by the way that you all get on well together and take very good care of each other. I think that your contribution to helping to improve Shelley is great. I was impressed with the ideas you have put forward through the school council.

I could see that there is a lot for you all to do both in school and after school. It is even more impressive that you are often winners in sporting events, even though you are not in a big school. You must be really skilful. No wonder you have just been awarded Sport England Activemark!

I was very pleased to see that the standard of your work is improving. It was clear to me that you try hard. I was very pleased to hear how much you enjoy the new 'creative curriculum' your teachers have introduced. However, I noticed that although your work is getting better, you could still do more to improve your writing and your mathematics and I am asking your teachers to help you.

Whilst talking to your teachers, I could tell they have many good ideas. I would really like them to spend more time on giving you more opportunities to understand how well you are doing and to show you the next steps so that you can improve your work.

Finally, I must thank your parents who wrote to me. They are clearly pleased with the way your school is developing. As one parent said, 'the school has just got better and better...my child always enjoys going to school.'

Thank you once again for your warm welcome.

All the best for the future.

Roger Brown Lead inspector