

Shirley Warren Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116262
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	326353
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	268
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Denholm
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Sproson
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Warren Crescent Southampton SO16 6AY
Telephone number	02380 773 975
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. Around 60% of the pupils are White British and 40% come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, including a rising number joining the school from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is well above average. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Mobility at the school is high, with many pupils joining the school partway through their primary education rather than just at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school offers extended services to families and the local community as part of a children's centre and through a breakfast and after school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The headteacher, leadership team and governors set out as the aim for Shirley Warren to be 'a centre of excellence in terms of achievements and relationships'. This is an aim that they achieve with admirable success. Although standards are generally below average by the end of Year 6, this represents outstanding achievement in relation to pupils' low prior attainment, both among those who start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those who join partway through their primary education. The excellent progress that is made by boys and girls of all abilities and from very different backgrounds is not just in the 'core subjects' of English, mathematics and science. Thanks to an impressive and innovative curriculum drawing on the school's superb facilities, pupils are helped to achieve exceedingly well in other subjects, and especially the expressive arts. Every child in the school learns a musical instrument, pupils are involved in making high-quality animation films and the school has its own radio studio where pupils develop their speaking and listening skills as they perform as disc jockeys and produce a daily podcast. These latter activities draw on the pupils' very strong skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

It is activities such as these that really enthuse the pupils. As one parent put it, 'When my child jumps for joy because they are going to school, then the school must be doing something right.' A parent of a child who transferred to Shirley Warren from another school describes how 'she has never been happier'. Almost all parents express very positive views of the school. They point with pride to their children's growing confidence and outstanding personal development, boosted by the many opportunities pupils have to take responsibility. The pupils' enthusiasm for the many fun things they get to do at school in turn contributes to their excellent attitude in lessons. Their behaviour is exemplary and pupils from different backgrounds all get on very well with each other. Pupils' accelerated learning results from teaching that is outstanding because it is consistently good or better throughout the school. Teachers and other staff cater exceptionally well for each pupil's individual learning needs, drawing very well on detailed assessments of each child's progress and ensuring timely support is provided for those with additional learning needs because of their learning difficulties or their unfamiliarity with English. Classes are managed very well, so that even those pupils who find it difficult to concentrate, generally listen very well to their teachers and to each other. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from the rich array of activities on offer to them both indoors and out, although a lack of labels and signs in the outdoor areas means some opportunities are missed for outdoor activities to contribute to word recognition and language skills.

Teachers' marking is of a high standard, especially in English. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. Many know the National Curriculum levels at which they are working and almost all know exactly what they need to focus on in order to improve their work. Pastoral care is equally impressive, so that pupils feel very safe. The oasis room, for example, offers a calming facility for those who otherwise have difficulty controlling their anger and emotions.

Parents are under no doubt that the credit for the school's great success is due to its exceptional leadership and management. As one explained, 'It's clear that the top priority for the school is the children.' They rightly praise the headteacher, but they also pay tribute to the 'supportive, caring and hard-working staff' whose 'enthusiasm rubs off on the kids'. Leaders have seized the initiative in devising new ways of making the pupils' learning exciting and fun, and their efforts have been recognised nationally in publications and DVDs from the Basic Skills Agency

and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, with well-chosen priorities driving the school improvement plan. However, the plan lacks quantifiable success criteria and this blunts its effectiveness as a management tool, especially for governors and staff with subject leadership roles. Nonetheless, the school's many impressive achievements demonstrate its impressive and continued capacity for sustained improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is exceedingly well run and children's progress is outstanding. There is some variation in the children's mix of skills and abilities when they join the Nursery, but skills are mostly low for children's ages, especially in communication, language and literacy. Children reach the standards expected of five-year-olds by the end of the Reception Year. This is an improvement since the time of last inspection. In the Nursery, adults work together very well as a team, keeping a close watch on children's welfare and development. Children learn to become independent right from the start. They choose from an extensive range of interesting and stimulating activities, including many designed to develop their skills in speaking and listening. Adults readily involve the children in discussion, gradually introducing new vocabulary to extend their confidence and fluency. There are many opportunities for creative and imaginative play, including the 'dentist's surgery' role play area which provides links between many areas of the curriculum. The outdoor areas have good climbing and play resources, although these lack the labels and signs which enrich the indoor learning environment. Children gain confidence in using their knowledge of phonics when reading and writing in the Reception class. This is the result of very good teaching and monitoring of children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set clear measurable success criteria in the school improvement plan that enable leaders and governors to better drive and more readily gauge improvement.
- Extend the opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their word and language recognition skills by providing more signs and labels for them in the outdoor areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Even though standards have been below average in the Year 2 and Year 6 national assessments, the tracking of each pupil's progress as they have moved up the school shows that pupils' rates of achievement and progress are outstanding in relation to their very low starting points. In 2008 national assessment data that compared the pupils' rates of progress from Year 2 to Year 6 with other schools put Shirley Warren in the top 10% of schools. It is the stimulating and exciting curriculum, and a diet of consistently good and better teaching, that results in boys and girls of all abilities making outstanding progress. Very carefully tailored support enables the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make often spectacular progress. The same is true for the increasing number of pupils who join the school at an early stage of learning English. As one very satisfied parent attested, 'My children use English as a second language and I have to admit that I am really pleased with their progress. This school makes sure that they learn fast and integrate with others, and this makes us as parents really happy.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Throughout the school the pupils greatly enjoy learning. Even those who have difficulty concentrating develop a strong work ethic and are increasingly confident in their own abilities. The school is working hard to improve attendance and persistent absenteeism through some innovative strategies. These are having a positive impact on attendance and, in turn, on pupils' achievement. Attendance now is broadly average and is improving. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Through themed weeks such as those on Latin America and China, pupils develop a genuine understanding of different cultures. Behaviour is excellent throughout school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They were proud to show off the healthy meals they prepared through the 'Sticky Fingers' project. They take great pride in their many responsibilities, for example as school councillors, playground buddies and members of the plant care team. Their innovative ideas in recycling won them a special prize in a local competition to improve the environment. The excellent achievement pupils make in their basic skills and their interpersonal skills prepare them very well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers know and get on very well with their pupils and they are very effective at managing their classes and motivating the pupils to work hard. The pupils readily describe how their teachers and support staff 'make learning fun', giving them lots of practical activities, involving them in agreeing the success criteria for lessons and increasingly evaluating for themselves how well they are learning. Drawing on the careful tracking of each pupil's progress, teachers match work to pupils' different capabilities and individual learning needs so that all are helped to build on what they have learnt before. Skilled questioning helps pupils to develop in confidence as well in their speaking skills as they are pressed to explain their thinking. Teachers are careful to ensure that they direct some questions so that they are not just taking answers from those who are quickest to volunteer. Although there are occasionally lessons where pupils get fidgety during long introductions or when they are given too long to complete a task, pupils learn at a rate that is consistently good or better because they generally listen well to their teachers and to each other.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This school makes the most of its spacious accommodation and excellent facilities to provide a curriculum which really stands out as innovative and exciting for the pupils. It appeals to pupils' interests and to their individual talents and gifts. The pupils especially enjoy the extensive opportunities to use ICT in many different ways. They produce films and animations that draw on and help develop skills across a range of different subjects and they produce podcasts in the school's radio studio using advanced audio recording and editing skills. Music is also given much prominence, with pupils benefiting from specialist teaching and the opportunity for all to learn an orchestral instrument. This stimulating everyday curriculum is further enriched through special art days and weeks, concerts, fun events and designated weeks for science and design technology which result in much high-quality work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

'I enjoy coming to school because teachers listen to what you have to say and sort out your problems.' This quote from a Year 5 pupil sums up the excellent care, support and guidance the school offers for its pupils. Pupils feel very happy and safe. Some pupils face considerable difficulties in their personal lives; the school supports them extremely effectively. Pupils know that they can count on the adults to get them through their difficulties. The outstanding support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English help them to make excellent progress. The school has utilised innovative strategies to raise attendance. The school's radio station and the opportunity to be disc jockeys before the start of the school day have proven very effective in improving persistent absences and punctuality. This, in turn, is having a positive impact on these pupils' achievement. The school offers excellent academic guidance for its pupils. Especially in English, teachers' marking gives pupils a very clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils know and understand their targets because they evaluate their work. The procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are rigorous and fully meet current requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The commitment and enthusiasm of the headteacher and leadership team are the driving force in moving the school forward in terms of achievement and maintaining high-quality provision. They have together built a cohesive team of staff who are keen to maximise what they provide for the benefit of all pupils. A number of leaders and staff have gained local and national recognition for their innovation and exemplary practice. They share their expertise in supporting other schools. All staff, including those in the office, work extremely well together as a team to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. Subject leaders are very skilled in monitoring progress and setting up strategies for improvement. However, their plan for improvement does not set clearly measurable success criteria. The school's outstanding contribution to community cohesion is evident in, for example, the school's ICT link with a Hong Kong school and the numerous projects to support families and the local community through the neighbouring Warren Centre. The governors are as enthusiastic as staff in moving the school forward. They are successful in balancing support for the school with the need to challenge and question.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirley Warren Primary and Nursery School, Southampton, SO16 6AY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Many of you and many parents told us what an excellent school you are in. You are right. Shirley Warren is an outstanding school where you are making great progress. What stands out most in your school are the amazing things you get to do. I was especially impressed at the animation films that you have made and I enjoyed listening to your radio station podcasts. Working as DJs in the radio studio at the start of the day has also given some of you an added incentive not to miss or be late for school.

We were delighted to see how very well behaved you all are and how very well everyone from different backgrounds get on together. This, and the excellent arrangements for looking after you all, helps to make Shirley Warren a happy, friendly place to be. There is really high-quality support for those that need it and the school benefits from super facilities, both indoors and out. We have asked, though, that staff put out more signs and labels in the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor areas to help those younger children as they develop their skills in recognising letters and words.

The school is exceedingly well run, and your headteacher and other school leaders are always on the lookout for ways of making it even better. With the governors, they have a plan that sets out the improvements they want to see over the year ahead. Just as you agree success criteria for each of your lessons, so we have asked that school leaders and governors agree and set out clear success criteria in their improvement plan.

We were very pleased to see that the teachers' marking and your individual targets are showing you exactly what you need to do to improve your work. You can help with this, too, by always reading your teachers' comments and doing your very best to follow their advice.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector