

Shotley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124606
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	314979
Inspection dates	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dawn Dell
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Newman
Date of previous school inspection	10 - 13 March 2003
School address	Main Road Shotley Suffolk IP9 1NR
Telephone number	01473 787255
Fax number	01473 788788

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and the guidance pupils receive about reaching the next stages of their learning. Evidence was gathered from classroom visits, discussions with staff, pupils and governors as well as examination of pupils' work and school documents, especially assessment data. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The attainment of most, but not all, children on entry to the school is below the levels normally expected, especially in communication language and literacy. A higher than average proportion of pupils enter or leave the school part way through this phase of their education and this trend is especially marked in Year 6.

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 where all groups of pupils flourish. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Excellent relationships with teachers help them to become confident, successful learners. The headteacher sets the tone and has played a pivotal role in developing the school's particular ethos. She has fostered a shared conviction among all staff that each and every pupil is special and is capable of exceptional achievement. Consequently everybody, staff and pupils, are encouraged to aim high. Pupils, including those who find learning difficult and those who speak English as an additional language, make excellent progress. By Year 6 standards are exceptionally high. These high standards are confirmed by the results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6. In 2007 the school's performance was exceptionally high in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Results have been consistently high over the past four years.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers and support staff love their jobs and are passionate about children's learning. Each member of the teaching force shares a commitment to exploring all avenues to promote the effective learning of each individual child. Support staff are equally committed and are particularly skilled in supporting pupils who find learning difficult. One key feature that contributes to the school's success is the meticulous way in which pupils' progress is measured and evaluated to check that all are on course to achieve the ambitious targets that are set for them. Assessment data is used to identify any pupil who is not making the progress expected and helps to target resources to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Some pupils who find aspects of learning hard make astonishing progress.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are brimming with confidence. They themselves say that a key strength of the school is the way in which their confidence is encouraged, 'This school is a special place because the teachers listen to us and this gives us more confidence. They never give up on us and keep trying and trying until we understand everything'. They wholeheartedly support charitable fund raising events, often organised by the highly effective school council. The eco council is also successful in promoting initiatives to conserve energy and recycle paper. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The overarching principle that guides the work of the school is that every individual pupil will be encouraged to succeed. Each pupil is treated sensitively by staff who know exactly what approach to adopt to motivate different individuals. Pupils receive exceptionally good pastoral guidance and report that they feel safe in school. They say that they would have no hesitation in sharing any problems with staff in the certain knowledge that they would be listened to sympathetically. Pupils develop a particularly good understanding of how to lead healthy life styles. They also receive detailed academic guidance. Teachers mark work thoroughly and include good advice on how to improve. Many pupils can recite their targets in literacy and numeracy and have a clear understanding of what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers give lots of praise and encouragement. They often use interactive whiteboards exceptionally well as, for example, to project cartoons that lead pupils in singing multiplication tables with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils are bursting with enthusiasm for learning. They say that lessons are fun and that they love finding out new things. Particularly good work was seen in history. A study of the Tudors, the Plague and the Great Fire of London provide inspiration for some powerful writing and stunning art work. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a good range of after school clubs and visits to places of interest. There is, however, scope to make further links between subjects so that the curriculum matches pupils' interests and gives them a better understanding of the inter-connection between different aspects of learning.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school self-evaluation is accurate. There have been many improvements since the last inspection and the school has excellent capacity to improve further. The governing body monitors the work of the school rigorously. Governors visit classrooms, observe lessons, talk with pupils and teachers and report their findings to the headteacher. They scrutinise pupils' work and are concentrating particularly on work produced by the mixed age classes to make sure that all children in these classes are receiving equally good provision and are making good progress. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. One comment was typical, 'The school has a marvellous atmosphere which is noticeable as soon as one walks in. It is bright, cheerful and colourful.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children settle happily in the Nursery where there is a strong emphasis on developing communication, language and literacy, often through structured role-play. Children enjoy acting the parts of customers and shopkeepers in the garden centre. The teacher and the nursery nurse encourage children to talk about activities such as planting seeds and to explain what they need to do to make the seeds grow successfully. Many of the new arrivals in the nursery find communication very difficult, however, and cannot easily find the words to express their thoughts clearly or confidently.

In the Reception class there is a strong emphasis on developing early reading and writing skills. The links between letters and the sounds they make are taught rigorously and this gives pupils a flying start in learning to read and write. Relationships are warm and friendly and children thoroughly enjoy their learning. They make exceptionally progress in all areas of learning, especially in their personal development. Standards by the end of the Reception year are close to national expectations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the thematic approach to teaching the curriculum so that it becomes even more stimulating and engages the interests of all pupils.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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



16 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Shotley Primary School, Shotley, Suffolk, IP9 1NR

What a great school! I thoroughly enjoyed my short visit. Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful.

There are so many good things about the school. Firstly you are all so friendly. You are very sensible and your behaviour is excellent. All the grown ups work hard to help you with your learning and want to make absolutely sure that you all do as well as you possibly can. You work hard and enjoy learning new things. You always do your best and so you make excellent progress in your learning. You are very good at reading, writing, mathematics and science. You particularly like history projects and I enjoyed reading some powerful writing about The Great Plague. You like sport and music and you sing your multiplication songs with gusto. You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves. You have a great understanding about how to eat a balanced diet and the need to take regular, vigorous exercise.

Your headteacher displays excellent leadership. All the teachers and support staff say that they love their jobs. They also really like each and every one of you and I know that you feel the same about them. This is why the school is such a happy place with lots of fun and laughter. The school council do a good job. The eco council also does a very important job and I know that you all do your best to support recycling and energy conservation.

I know that Mrs Newman and the teachers would like to link subjects together more to create even more exciting projects and I agree that this is a good idea to make your learning even more interesting.

I wish you every success in the future.

John Messer
Lead inspector