

Shirley Community Primary School

Nuffield Road, Chesterton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB4 1TF

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The co-headteachers have created a calm environment that makes everyone feel welcome. It prepares pupils well for learning.
- Staff are committed and hard working. The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Teachers plan activities that engage pupils' interests. They provide clear explanations to support learning. Consequently, pupils learn well.
- Good use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge so that pupils falling behind catch up quickly.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school.
- Adults use their skills effectively to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils also make good progress by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils behave well because of the high expectations set by adults and the care they provide.
- The curriculum meets the interests of pupils. Topics have a clear purpose so pupils know what they will find out from studying them.
- From low starting points, children make good progress in the early years. They quickly become confident in their relationships with one another.
- While historical rates of attainment are below the national average, current pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' writing is improving because they are taught well and are given opportunities to write often, and in different subjects. Younger pupils make use of their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to write simple sentences.
- In some classes, teachers do not provide challenging enough tasks, especially for the most able pupils.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. This was better in 2017. However, there is still more to do to ensure that pupils attend more often.
- Senior leaders do not make good use of their tracking system to set ambitious targets for all year groups.
- Governors ask challenging questions and know the school well. However, plans provided by leaders are not precise about how quickly they can expect planned actions to have impact.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the knowledge and effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - using the pupil assessment tracking system more accurately, to set higher targets, so that expectations of pupils' achievements are raised
 - ensuring that plans include regular outcomes that can be measured, so that governors can hold senior leaders to account for the rate of improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - providing teachers with greater knowledge of how to move pupils on in their learning
 - ensuring tasks and activities are consistently challenging, particularly for the most able.
- Continue to promote pupils' regular attendance and reduce their persistent absence through closer work with parents and the community.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The co-headteachers have an unwavering commitment to support pupils and their families. Their calm approach provides a stable environment where pupils are well cared for. Staff are quite rightly proud to work at the school. They contribute to supporting the values that promote inclusion. As one pupil pointed out to an inspector, 'This is a good school because people make you welcome.'
- Parents acknowledge that their children are happy at school. They said that the information they receive is helpful. They commented, 'This is a truly inclusive school that does its best for all pupils, whatever their background, culture or ability.'
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and identifies clear priorities for improvement.
- Senior leaders provide good training for teaching assistants. This means that they understand how to support the pupils they work with. New teachers benefit from effective coaching, which successfully addresses key areas of teaching they wish to improve. Phase leaders meet regularly with their teams to provide suggestions to help support pupils' better progress in class.
- Leaders know the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils. They carefully consider how best to use the additional funding they receive. For example, family support workers are effectively deployed to support pupils' improved behaviour and attendance. Targeted support for reading is also improving pupils' rates of progress. This means that by the time disadvantaged pupils leave the school they are making similar good progress to their classmates.
- Inclusion leaders are knowledgeable about a range of complex learning needs. They have a sharp focus on the use of additional funding they receive, and ensure that it makes a positive impact on the quality of support received by pupils. Regular discussions with teachers check how well pupils are doing. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The sport premium is providing a range of activities to promote pupils' improved participation in sport. More clubs are available for pupils. Teachers deliver dance activities from training they have received. The school's sports leader is new to the post and is yet to evaluate fully how the funding is making a difference to pupils' experiences and achievements.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Planned activities provide a purpose to learning. For example, in one class research and work on the Mayans was helping pupils become 'information detectives'. Regular blogs on the school website inform parents and carers about their work.
- Science is a strong feature of the curriculum. Evidence from pupils' topic books shows development of key knowledge and investigation skills. Leaders are introducing ways of checking the progress that pupils make in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain. During 'Heritage Day', they

learn about different cultures and beliefs. They develop knowledge of work through the 'token economy'. Older pupils apply for particular roles to earn tokens. In turn, they can exchange them for items to use at school. Trained young interpreters help pupils who speak English as an additional language to settle into school quickly.

- The local authority has provided good support where there were changes in staffing. This has helped to improve leaders' expertise and knowledge.
- Leaders use the tracking system to identify pupils who are falling behind and require extra help. However, the targets set from the information it provides are not always sufficiently ambitious.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of skills and expertise to their roles. They are committed to helping the school serve the community. They ask challenging questions about the information provided on the co-headteachers' report. Regular visits to the school help them to understand what is working well and ask about anything they do not understand.
- Governors fulfil their duties effectively in respect of school policies and finance.
- Governors understand how the school intends to improve. They track the school's planned priorities. However, the plans they receive from leaders do not have timely measures included within them. Consequently, the governors are not able to be precise about the urgency of achieving the school's aims.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The well-being of pupils is important and staff understand the procedures to keep pupils safe. They have received appropriate training and are alert to any signs that pupils may be at risk. Effective use is made of external agencies to address the needs of pupils and their families.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their own safety. They are confident that adults would address any concerns. All parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire agreed that their children are safe in school.
- At the time of the inspection, the single central record contained a few minor administrative errors. These were corrected and the record was complete by the end of the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers provide clear explanations for pupils and question them carefully. This checks their understanding and means that pupils settle quickly to work. The activities planned by teachers capture pupils' interest and contribute to the positive relationships they enjoy in the class.

- Teachers use resources effectively, especially to support pupils who require more help. This means that pupils can work independently. Pupils also select their own equipment to help their learning. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils freely chose dictionaries that helped to support their recognition of unfamiliar words.
- Teaching assistants receive good quality training. They use their skills effectively and tailor support for those with SEN and/or disabilities. They are sensitive to the welfare of pupils, helping to manage their behaviour, so that they continue to learn during the lesson.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, especially in key stage 2. They are closely monitored and different strategies are used to help them do as well as their classmates.
- Pupils present work neatly and take pride in the quality of their work. They develop handwriting skills so that many are able to write cursively on blank paper. This is consistent across both English and topic books.
- Pupils' enjoyment of reading is important for leaders. An early-morning reading club and the use of reading volunteers ensure that there are increased opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Teachers have sound knowledge to support the good teaching of phonics. The employment of a skilled intervention teacher helps to track the progress of, and support, those pupils who require additional input. These pupils are now catching up. Consequently, there is a higher proportion of pupils on track to achieve the required score for the Year 1 phonics screening check this year.
- Teachers use different strategies to teach mathematics. This helps pupils who learn in different ways. Teachers make sure that pupils practise and chant number rhymes so that they become fluent. They have opportunities to apply what they know to solving different problems. Teachers provide pupils with correct mathematical terms when they explain problems and calculations. This helps pupils develop a better understanding. For example, pupils were able to talk about different measures when learning to read scales.
- Teaching is weaker where staff do not identify when the most able pupils are over-rehearsing known skills at the expense of deepening their knowledge and understanding. Some pupils told the inspectors that the work was easy and this was confirmed when they shared the work in their books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders recognise different challenges faced by pupils from a diverse community. However, their high expectations and calm approach creates a harmonious environment where adults and children respect one another. Support for families and pupils who have difficulties is effective. One parent said, 'I believe this school always has the best interests of children at its heart.'
- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the support and care they receive from adults. They say this helps them in class when they learn. Teachers establish clear

routines so that pupils work together well when they share and discuss ideas.

- Pupils have opportunities to carry out different roles and responsibilities. This contributes to developing their attitudes of care and tolerance. Pupils can volunteer to work as an 'eco warrior' or become a 'food ambassador'. 'Captains' provide reports of the latest sporting events and house teams create a sense of belonging. The school raises pupils' aspirations through activities that take place in different institutions, which expose pupils to the world of work.
- Pupils understand about bullying because teachers take time to explain what this means. Opportunities to participate in events such as 'anti-bullying week' have raised their awareness. An overwhelming majority of pupils said that bullying is not a problem at their school. They are confident that if they had a concern, adults would put things right.
- Pupils said they are safe. They understand different ways to keep themselves safe, either at school or when at home.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well both in class and outside at lunchtimes. They are polite, often holding doors open for one another. They were happy to speak to inspectors, sharing their work and experiences. They respond well to teachers' instructions and listen respectfully to one another when sharing ideas. Consequently, they are able to concentrate in lessons with little disturbance. For example, during whole-school singing assembly, pupils' attention and response contributed to a high level of performance.
- Attendance is below the national average, but improved in 2017. Leaders provide incentives for families and rewards are offered to pupils, including 'punctuality panda' for getting to school on time. However, leaders have identified for themselves that there is more work to do to reduce the amount of persistent absence. This has remained consistently high for a small proportion of pupils.
- Detailed behaviour logs enable adults to check for patterns and trends in pupils' behaviour. Information helps to identify the type of support required. Evidence in logs shows that the number of recorded incidents is reducing. However, fixed-term exclusions are above the national average. The reasons for these exclusions are documented. Careful planning and the use of support groups help pupils return to school smoothly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress by the time they leave the school. As a result, they are better prepared for secondary school.
- When children enter Reception, their range of skills and abilities are below those typical for their age. Outcomes by the end of Year 2 are still below the national average, although they rose in 2017. Teachers are tackling barriers to learning successfully, but for some pupils these can be varied and significant. A range of interventions are helping pupils to catch up well, especially in reading. Evidence from inspection shows

that progress is good in classes but that teachers' expectations, on rare occasions, are not ambitious enough.

- The teaching of phonics is good. Across the year groups, a consistent approach means that pupils are making good progress so a higher proportion are on track to achieve the expected standard this year. Regular reference to letters and sounds in reading and writing helps pupils to apply and consolidate what they have learned. The score at the Year 1 phonics screening check dipped in 2017 and was below the national average. However, this was due to changes in the year group because new pupils arrived with less knowledge of phonics and others left the school.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points by the time they leave key stage 2, especially in mathematics. Attainment is improving, but remains below the national average for expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Currently, the progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6 is quicker than in Years 3 and 4.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of pupils' written work has improved. Adults provide pupils with a variety of language that they use in their written work. Older pupils are encouraged to apply skills in a range of subjects. For example, pupils used their knowledge of non-chronological reports to write about a deciduous forest. Teachers expect pupils to write as well in their topic books as in their English books.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Effective use is made of visual images and resources to help pupils to understand mathematical concepts. Adults' clear explanations make a valuable contribution to supporting the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Sometimes the work provided for the most able is not sufficiently challenging and slows the progress they make.
- By the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils at the school. The effective targeting of additional funding ensures that good support is provided for their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Pre-school and Reception classes from a range of diverse backgrounds, reflecting the local community. They mostly have skills and understanding below what is typical for their age. Staff carry out baseline assessments to target provision to meet children's development needs. Children make progress in their acquisition of language. For example, many children confidently articulated their learning to inspectors.
- Children settle quickly and build good relationships with each other. Activities encourage them to work together and speak to one another. For example, children shared their experiences about a recent school trip with partners. They had to listen carefully to what their partner described.
- Adults play an effective role in supporting children's progress. They encourage the use of language by modelling key words for children to repeat. They question effectively and allow time for the child to respond independently. Their calm manner is reflected in children's settled behaviour.
- The quality of teaching is good. Activities are purposeful and there is both child-initiated and adult-led work. Adults skilfully direct children to make the most of their

play. Learning takes place equally effectively both in the classroom and outdoors. For example, a writing task that started indoors moved outdoors because children wanted to find out more about the creatures in the environment.

- Staff show a high level of care for the children. They have received appropriate training to keep children safe, including paediatric first-aid training.
- The early years leader is new to this responsibility. She is receiving good support and is using it effectively. As a result, the quality of provision is equal across both classrooms. The assessments recorded in learning journals are accurate. However, plans are not always precise or ambitious enough about expectations for learning.
- Children learn the early skills of phonics well. This is evident in their writing, where plausible spellings represent the sounds they hear. When writing about animals, one child wrote 'meercats ari cyoot'. Some children are confident with writing and complete tasks quickly. However, progress is slower when they wait for other children to finish.

School details

Unique reference number	110663
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10041782

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	393
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Smith
Co-headteachers	Angela Leach/Hannah Kidney
Telephone number	01223 712252
Website	www.shirley.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	head@shirley.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average, two-form entry primary school. A pre-school opened in September 2017 and operates under the responsibility of the school's governing body. Children can start the pre-school after their third birthday. At the time of this inspection, 18 children attended the pre-school.
- Currently, two co-headteachers lead the school.
- Most pupils are White British, but pupils from a range of backgrounds make up more than half on the school roll.
- Approximately one-fifth of the pupils are from the Traveller community.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of key stage 2.
- A centre that provides for excluded pupils is part of the school's complex, but is managed separately and did not form part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed a variety of lessons across all classes. Some of these observations were jointly undertaken with senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed a range of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the co-headteachers, assessment leader, inclusion leader, phase leaders, early years leader and subject leaders.
- An inspector met with a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with staff and pupils.
- An inspector observed pupils in the playground at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and asked them questions about their reading.
- Responses from 40 parents and carers to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 36 free-text responses from parents were analysed. An inspector gathered pupils' views at the end of the day and an inspector met with a parent.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including information relating to safeguarding, exclusion, behaviour logs, attendance records and the school's own information regarding reports on the quality of teaching and assessment.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Skeggs	Ofsted Inspector
Pete Sewell	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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