

Shackleton Primary School

Pearcey Road, Bedford, MK42 9LZ

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children join the Reception Year with skills that are generally well below those typical for their age. They make good progress throughout the school.
- Pupils are on track to reach expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Excellent support for the pupils who speak English as an additional language means they make rapid progress in speaking English and in other areas of learning.
- The many pupils who join the school at different points throughout the year make good progress from the time they arrive.
- Behaviour and attendance have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their learning and little time is lost in lessons as a result of poor behaviour.
- Leaders, including governors, have a clear vision for the school that puts it at the heart of the community.
- Leaders have improved teaching by ensuring that teachers make better use of information on pupils' progress so that work is usually set at the right level of difficulty for different ability groups in each class.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards are now rising rapidly in reading and mathematics, but the improvement is not yet so clear in writing. Older pupils do not write enough extended pieces of work.
- Opportunities are not always taken for the youngest pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The most-able pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy for them.
- The new leaders responsible for looking after different year groups have not yet become fully involved in their new role. They do not give sufficient help to classroom teachers.
- Although improving, attendance over the last year was still just below average

Information about this inspection

- Teaching was observed in 17 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were gathered from the 11 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, analysis of the school's own questionnaire for parents and from talking to a group of parents attending a regular Parents Forum.
- The views of pupils were gathered from two meetings, and from discussions in lessons and around the school over the whole of the inspection.
- The views of staff were gathered from the replies to the staff questionnaire and from discussions.
- Inspectors looked in detail at samples of pupils' written work and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took into account a range of written evidence, including information on the progress and attainment of pupils, teachers' planning and assessment, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Nigel Grimshaw	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school changed its status from that of lower school to primary school in September 2013 and is currently taking an additional year group each year. It gained pupils in Year 5 this September and will expand again to its full capacity when Year 6 arrives next September. Its current size is above average for a primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- More than half the pupils speak English as an additional language, many arriving at school speaking no English. Pupils currently speak 27 languages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding available for certain groups, including those known to be entitled to free school meals, or who are in the care of the local authority) is very much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed, taking up her post in January 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing to match those now found in reading and mathematics by:
 - promoting opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills in the Reception Year
 - increasing opportunities to develop extended writing skills throughout the school
 - ensuring that lessons include sufficient challenge for the most-able pupils to maximise their writing skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that the newly created year group leaders provide more support to teachers in developing their classroom skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children start the Reception Year with communication and number skills that are well below those typical for children of their age. Effective teaching, especially in reading and mathematics, supports good progress but pupils are still below age-expected levels in key areas when they start Year 1.
- Some children start Reception in the summer term, spending only a term in school before starting Year 1. Teachers now receive better information on their progress in the nursery school which nearly all attended. They use this to set work to help these children catch up with the others. Good support is provided for children who do not speak English well.
- During Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in all areas, including English and mathematics. More than half speak English as an additional language and the progress made by those who joined the school in the Reception Year is better than that of similar pupils nationally.
- The turnover of pupils at the school is high, as families move in and out of the local area. Some pupils who are making good progress leave the school during the year, while others with more limited knowledge and skills take their places. This has a strong impact on the school's overall results at the end of Key Stage 1, which are below average.
- Detailed checks on every pupil show accelerating progress in English and mathematics through Key Stage 2 for those already in the school at the start of Year 3. Those who join the school during Key Stage 2 receive the same effective support as that provided in Key Stage 1 and they also begin to make good progress. The school's projections based on current performance and the quality of work in pupils' books show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are set to match national averages. This represents good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Good opportunities exist for the school's most-able pupils, including a half-termly gathering of similar pupils from all local schools, which provides a range of challenging activities. These activities support pupils in accelerating their progress. Teachers do not challenge the most-able pupils enough, particularly in writing. This limits their chance of achieving as well as they could.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or those who simply do not make expected progress, are identified quickly. This enables carefully planned support to be provided for individual pupils or small groups to be skilfully administered by teachers or teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils make good progress, narrowing the gap between their attainment and that of others.
- Pupil premium funding provides a range of support that enables pupils to make good progress. This includes one-to-one and small-group teaching by teachers and teaching assistants, supporting better behaviour, and paying the cost of visits by pupils to events that support their learning. This helps them to make good progress and catch up the other pupils. In some year groups, they fully succeed in catching them up. Overall, these pupils are currently not more than a term behind their classmates in English and mathematics.
- Reading is promoted strongly throughout the school. Standards in reading are rising sharply, supported by a new scheme for the teaching of phonics (the understanding of letters and the sounds they make). In the Year 1 national phonics screening in 2013, the school's performance

was much stronger than previously.

- Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils are achieving more highly than other groups in all areas. In part this reflects the fact that these communities are rather more settled and so fewer children are joining and leaving during their time in primary education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good, with some outstanding practice.
- In the Reception Year, a focus on phonics and mathematics supports good progress and preparation for joining Year 1. At the same time, there are plenty of opportunities for children to learn through play and exploration.
- Technology supports learning well and pupils are confident in using laptops, tablet computers and interactive whiteboards. Activities are well chosen and interesting, so that pupils enjoy their learning very much and are focused and engaged on learning in every class. Teachers use questioning effectively to see how well pupils understand their work and to give them opportunities to discuss ideas.
- Good-quality teaching helps all pupils to develop skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics through an exciting range of learning opportunities. The oldest pupils have, for example, studied the theme 'Out of Africa', which has also included art and songs from Africa and, after researching the life of Nelson Mandela, letters are being sent to the South African embassy following his recent death.
- Marking is regular and in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils have time to make corrections and improve their work based on the teachers' advice. Pupils have many opportunities to assess their own and other pupils' work. The quality of work in pupils' books reflects the rapidly rising standards now being reached.
- Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers, supporting pupils of differing abilities in their learning, so all can be successful. Teaching assistants are not fully used during lesson introductions.
- Teaching assistants sometimes miss opportunities in the Reception Year to strengthen pupils' speaking and listening skills, and this adversely affects the youngest pupils' readiness for writing. Older pupils sometimes do not have enough time to complete extended pieces of writing.
- Teachers, usually use the information they have on the progress every pupil makes to set work at the right level for them. When pupils need additional support – for example because they are learning English, or they have learning difficulties – the help comes quickly. Support is targeted at meeting the specific needs of individual pupils and this accelerates their progress. However, not enough is expected of the most-able pupils, because the work they are given is sometimes too easy for them, which slows down their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour has improved in the last year, since the school began using pupil premium funding effectively to employ a mentor who provides behaviour support. In particular, the behaviour of boys in the playground has been improved significantly by getting them engaged in positive play

activities. This has meant they are better prepared for learning when they return to lessons.

- Improved behaviour in lessons means pupils are now showing good engagement in learning. This, in turn, has led to rising standards. Learning is more effective because teachers do not have to waste time tackling poor behaviour in class.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. A particular strength is the way in which pupils from many different backgrounds get on very well together. Pupils learn to appreciate the many cultures and traditions found in school and that they can all be celebrated in a positive way.
- Pupils, along with their parents and carers, believe strongly that the school is a safe place where everyone is valued. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not an issue in the school. They have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying and understand the dangers of misusing the internet and social networking sites.
- Attendance has risen for each of the last four years. It was just below average last year and is currently close to the national average. The school has worked to engage with parents to encourage them to get their children to school and has been successful in bring steady improvement.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision of a school at the heart of its community, where parents are fully involved, is being realised. She has been joined by a deputy headteacher with complementary skills, and between them they are driving the recent improvements in standards.
- Senior leaders make regular formal and informal checks on teaching, teachers' planning and assessment. They are very well informed and in a good position to help staff to develop their skills and effectiveness.
- The school has well-structured systems for managing staff performance. Challenging objectives support professional development and help the school to meet its identified priorities for improvement.
- The leadership team has been expanded since the start of this school year. Year group leaders are still at an early stage of developing their role in supporting teachers. At the moment, all lesson observations are carried out by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, reducing the time they have available for other aspects of managing the school.
- The curriculum has been changed to provide more opportunities for topic and themed work. Teachers are successful in engaging pupils, which means that all pupils, whatever their ability, enjoy their work and are enthusiastic learners.
- The government grant to promote sporting activity has been used effectively in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire. Their expertise is providing professional development in sport for teachers to enable them to sustain a higher quality of provision into the future.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school. At a Parents' Forum meeting attended by an inspector, one parent said of the headteacher, 'It's like having a mum here, she has time for everyone' and another said 'The school is brilliant, you can't fault it.'

- The school works closely with other professionals, supporting and promoting links with families to help parents provide the fullest support for their children. This enables the school to support the individual needs of its pupils and develop close and supportive relationships.
- The school's self-evaluation clearly identifies its strengths and areas for development. From this, leaders effectively identify priorities for continuing to improve provision to meet the needs of pupils.
- The local authority provides effective support and is a positive partner in the process of school improvement. Its input has included training for staff and members of the governing body that have supported the process of school improvement well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective and all its statutory duties, including safeguarding, are carried out rigorously. Governors are committed to the success of the school and have been active in supporting its change of status to a primary school. Recent additions to the governing body have brought specific expertise that has enabled it to challenge the school more effectively. Governors undertake effective financial monitoring, including oversight of the school's pupil premium funding and its use to maximise pupils' outcomes. Many governors have taken advantage of a wide range of training. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning, and of the areas of responsibility managed by different members of staff, which are monitored effectively. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher, and governors understand the links between teachers' performance and rates of pay. Only teachers judged to be at least good and whose pupils make good progress receive pay increases. Governors are aware of the achievement of the school compared with the performance of other schools nationally. Governors ensure that the arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet current requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109526
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	413366

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcia Davies
Headteacher	Ann Parish
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2010
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