

Shillingstone C of E (VA) Primary School

Augustan Avenue, Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, DT11 0TX

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in pupils' attainment, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and almost all pupils make good progress.
- This is because teaching has improved and is now consistently good with some that is outstanding, especially in Years 5 and 6. However, in Years 1 to 4, progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent and pupils say, 'Lessons are never boring!' Lively teaching and a stimulating curriculum capture their interest and create a very positive climate for learning. Pupils feel very safe, thoroughly enjoy school and their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary.
- The headteacher, new at the time of the last inspection, has led the school firmly through a period of considerable change. The school is well settled in its new building and the quality of teaching has been improved. By using the help and advice provided by the local authority, the headteacher has built a competent team of teachers, assistants and governors who together have successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection.
- A strength of the school is its inclusive nature. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances may cause them to be vulnerable receive a very warm welcome and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 to 4 is not quick enough and slower than in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching strategies for improving writing are not as well established in these year groups.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 12 lessons, observed four teachers and made some shorter visits to classrooms. She was accompanied by the headteacher for all lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including pupils' work, systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, and the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- Meetings were held with members of governing body, school staff and several groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to during lessons, around school and on the playground. The inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from members of staff were analysed. The inspector also took account of the views expressed in 15 on-line responses from Parent View, in meetings with parents and carers and in the school's most recent questionnaire to parents and carers.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in Reception are taught in their own class. All other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is similar to the national average.
- Almost all pupils are of a White British heritage.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- There is a privately run pre-school on site which is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently achieved the Eco Bronze Award in recognition of its environmental work.
- Since the last inspection the school has moved into a newly built primary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing in Years 1 to 4 by:
 - sharing the excellent practice in outstanding lessons and spreading strategies that have already raised achievement in Years 5 and 6
 - ensuring that teaching meets pupils' differing abilities and all teachers support pupils in their writing by working with them in small groups and showing them what good writing looks like
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in different subjects
 - ensuring that pupils can accurately spell the most frequently used words
 - ensuring that pupils hold their pencil correctly so that they can write easily.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Reception class with levels of knowledge and skills that are broadly expected for their age except in literacy, where their knowledge of letters and sounds is below expectation. They make good progress, but until recently this was not built upon well enough in Years 1 and 2. However, because of effective action taken by the headteacher, teaching has improved and pupils in these years are now making good progress.
- Attainment in Year 6 was high last year. This year it is average because of the small year group with almost a third of pupils having complex learning needs. However, achievement is good.
- In reading and mathematics almost all pupils are making better than expected progress. In writing it accelerates considerably in Years 5 and 6. Here, pupils write exciting and effective openings for their stories, using words such as 'bleak', 'blustery' and 'breathtaking' imaginatively. Progress is slower in Years 1 to 4, although it is improving because teaching is better at demonstrating the writing process, especially to support less able pupils. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Reception children enjoy 'The Big Talk', a valuable speaking and listening activity. By teaching small groups, adults expertly ensure that children practise listening to each other and learn to answer questions well.
- Letters and sounds are correctly taught so that younger pupils can use this knowledge well in their reading. They say that 'chunking' helps them to tackle unfamiliar words. Most older pupils read a wide range of books fluently and clearly enjoy reading.
- However, pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 to 4 is hindered by inaccurate spelling of the most frequently used words that cannot be sounded out. Some pupils struggle with ideas for writing, whilst others do not hold their pencils correctly which prevents them from writing easily.
- All pupils are effectively included in lessons. This is a strength of the school. Some pupils have extremely complex needs. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well supported. Less able pupils made good progress when learning to use adjectives and connectives because the teacher and the teaching assistant showed them, in small groups, quite specifically how to construct their sentences for creative writing.
- Checks show that initiatives funded by the pupil premium, especially to support reading, have been successful in closing the gap in attainment between the lowest 20% of pupils and the majority.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, with some that is outstanding. Teachers guide and challenge pupils particularly well in understanding how to improve their work.
- Although teachers are skilful in teaching literacy and numeracy, the legacy of previous inadequate teaching is still apparent in writing for some younger pupils. These pupils do not spell well enough and have insufficient interest and confidence to write. Some do not find it physically easy to write because their pencil grip has not been corrected. However, teachers are now well equipped to help pupils to improve and this is showing in the good progress pupils are now making.
- Pupils like their teachers and enjoy excellent relationships with them. They want to do their best and, as a result, they behave very well and have excellent attitudes to their work, including when working independently.
- Pupils also make good progress, apart from in writing, because teachers plan well for pupils of different abilities, setting individual targets and steps on 'learning ladders' to challenge them.
- Teachers engage pupils well by using interactive whiteboards to introduce lessons and explain learning. Points to be learned are usually made very clear to pupils. As a result, they know

exactly what their tasks are and can explain confidently what they have to do. In mathematics, for example, when rounding to 10 and 100, and rounding decimals for the more able pupils, 'learning ladders' were used very effectively to encourage pupils to have a go at the next step in their learning.

- Well-targeted professional development for teachers means they are skilful at asking questions, enabling pupils to show what they know as well as checking pupils' understanding. Choosing a pupil to answer rather than choosing someone with their hand up helps all pupils to pay attention and participate well in lessons.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils showed a high degree of respect for the faith and culture of others during an assembly based upon understanding that none of us is perfect and that we can learn from our mistakes. Avid discussion about the reason for a deliberate mistake was followed by a 'stillness', giving pupils time for valuable, quiet reflection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is excellent. Staff, pupils and all parents and carers who gave their views are fully supported by inspection evidence and school records that behaviour is exemplary and bullying is very rare.
- The highly inclusive nature of the school ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are made to feel very welcome. All make a significant contribution to the mutual respect that exists between adults and pupils.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and parents and carers also fully support this view.
- Anti-bullying week and an effective personal and social curriculum contribute to pupils' in-depth understanding of the different types of bullying, including that involving the internet and mobile phones.
- Behaviour in lessons during the inspection was very good because pupils are interested in what they are learning and work well together. Staff are very skilled in managing behaviour so pupils who might otherwise be at risk of exclusion are fully included without risk of disruption to learning for other pupils.
- Pupils are very polite and particularly caring towards each other, always including disabled pupils in their work and play.
- Pupils feel valued and respected because they are trusted with jobs as monitors and 'buddies'. Members of the school council develop pride in their school as they make decisions such as which charity to support and choosing play equipment.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has determinedly and successfully led the school through a period of significant disruption since the previous inspection, including moving to a new school building and rigorously dealing with teaching in need of improvement.
- She has ensured that all health and safety and safeguarding requirements were met for the new building and worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils receive good teaching.
- With the help and advice of the local authority, the headteacher has eradicated any poor teaching and established a strong team of teachers and assistants fully committed to improvement, equal opportunities and inclusion for all. Teachers do not move up the salary scale unless there is an improvement in pupils' performance.
- The headteacher and senior teacher are a strong leadership team. Areas for improvement have been accurately identified and precise action plans put in place. A consistent approach to raising attainment for different groups of pupils has been successfully adopted.
- New systems for checking pupils' progress and setting very challenging targets for all teachers

and pupils, especially in writing, are beginning to make a difference in Years 1 to 4.

- The success of these developments shows that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.
- The curriculum gives pupils many rich experiences and is carefully planned to take account of pupils' different ages and interests. Excellent opportunities in after-school activities contribute well to pupils' personal, social and health education, especially for such a small school.
- The school benefits from belonging to the group of local schools as well as a group of schools across the county interested in improvement. These partnerships enable teachers to contribute to, and take advantage of, professional development.
- Equality of opportunity for different groups of pupils is promoted very well and the school does not tolerate any discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously and regular training and monitoring ensure that high standards are maintained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - effective monitoring of the work of the school and challenging it to do better has improved significantly as a result of training for governors
 - the governing body has been enabled to write its own improvement targets. It has adopted a virtual governance on-line program which is enabling better organisation and communication
 - through this tool the impact of pupil premium funding on improving the performance of particular groups of pupils is assiduously tracked
 - governors monitor the headteacher's performance rigorously and ensure that her objectives are driving forward areas for improvement across the school.

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	113813
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	405483

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susie Poe
Headteacher	Jane Whitehouse-Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2010
Telephone number	01258 860446
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