

Shadsworth Junior School

Arran Avenue, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 2ET

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2014

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.

- This school is at the heart of the community. It is a friendly and welcoming learning community where all pupils are valued as individuals.
- From their low starting points more pupils are making expected and better than expected progress in writing, mathematics and especially reading.
- Standards of attainment are rising rapidly across the school.
- Very few pupils enter the school having attained the higher Level 3. Many more leave Year 6 having attained the higher Level 5.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some which is outstanding.
- Vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and those entitled to the pupil premium, receive good support that enables them to achieve well.
- Art and design is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to use a wide variety of media.
- Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around school and relationships are excellent. Pupils are courteous, polite and respectful. They enjoy their school and say they feel safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum, extra visits and activities
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors lead the school well and the highly motivated staff give them full support. Staff training is carefully chosen and benefits teaching and achievement.
- The partnership with parents is strong.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They challenge leaders while providing support and encouragement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils do not get enough practice in writing at length. There are gaps in their understanding of punctuation and grammar and they do not always have the chance to put their errors right.
- In mathematics the most able are not always challenged sufficiently, especially with regard to applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read from Year 3 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with two representatives from the local authority and three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Discussions were held with parents who brought their children to school and eight parents who agreed to meet with the inspectors because the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were too few to be meaningful.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

Inspection team

Mr Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mr Anthony Buckley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Shadsworth Junior is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is three times higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is three times higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is three times higher than the national average.
- Virtually all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has been awarded the National Centre of Excellence for Inclusion and holds the Gold Quality Mark award for science,

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise pupils' attainment in writing by:
 - providing pupils with more well-planned opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are taught English grammar and punctuation on a planned basis throughout the school
 - ensuring pupils are given time to correct and improve their work by acting on the guidance in their teachers' marking .
- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics, especially for the most able, by:
 - quickly amending activities when pupils find the work too easy or too hard to make certain they are always fully challenged
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to problem solving activities and mathematical investigations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils generally enter the school with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well below average.
- In 2011 and 2012 standards by the end of Year 6 were average. This reflects the good progress made by pupils from their low starting points.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 dipped in 2013 but, again, pupils made good progress over time from their low starting points. School data and work in pupils' books shows that pupils currently in school are making good progress in their learning.
- The school places great emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout all aspects of school life. To support pupils with severe speech and language difficulties it has brought in a specialist speech and language team to boost pupils' language and communication skills. The benefits are impressive. For example, improvements in pupils' communication skills are now being reflected in their ability to write more clearly in sentences.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'I soak it up. When I'm into a book there's only me and I become lost to the real world'.
- Teachers use a range of methods to make sure that those who may struggle with reading are helped to catch up, including going back to basics and teaching the sounds that letters represent. Consequently, the school has adopted and extended the infant school's system for teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make). This is having a positive impact on improving pupils' reading skills, particularly in Year 3.
- Pupils' writing is helped by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts their vocabulary, and to speaking and explaining ideas in lessons. However, some of the most able pupils do not attain the standards of which they are capable because they do not have enough opportunities to engage in extended writing activities in English or other subjects.
- In mathematics standards throughout the school are now improving rapidly. However, the progress of the most able is sometimes slowed because they do not always move on quickly enough to challenging problem solving activities.
- Standards in art and design are high. Pupils relish the exciting range of experiences they are given and the variety of medium with which they work, including firing their clay work in a kiln. Life size busts of characters from children's books and card sculptures inspired by Picasso's 'Guitars' are spectacular.
- The school promotes and checks that all pupils have equal opportunities. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional teaching assistants and nurturing activities. The attainment of Year 6 pupils who in 2013 were supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, was the equivalent of eight months behind that of their classmates in reading and mathematics but eight months ahead in writing.
- School data and inspection evidence show that the current pupils supported by the pupil premium funding are making faster progress than their peers. This is because they are getting excellent additional support from a qualified teacher and highly skilled teaching assistants that the funding provides.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good.
- Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. This means that pupils are confident learners prepared to try hard and unafraid of making mistakes because they know their teachers will always help them. This approach to teaching has resulted in the

development of an excellent climate in which pupils can learn and feel safe.

- Classrooms are bright and organised well with displays celebrating pupils' work in a wide range of topics.
- For the main part pupils learn well because teachers use assessment information effectively to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for pupils. However, occasionally in mathematics, the work set is either too easy or too hard. When this occurs teachers do not always act quickly enough to put this right and provide a more appropriate level of challenge which would move learning on at a more rapid rate.
- Throughout the school teachers provide pupils with interesting and imaginative opportunities to read and write for a range of purposes. However, they are not given enough opportunities to engage in extended pieces of writing in English or other subjects. This limits the opportunities of some pupils to practise their skills and reach higher standards. Nor is the teaching of punctuation and grammar sufficiently well planned; this results in gaps in pupils' learning.
- The creative way teacher's link reading and writing is helping pupils understand how authors use rich and exciting language in their books. In mathematics, the basic skills are taught extremely well. However, while teachers provide many activities to encourage and enable pupils to practise their mathematical skills, pupils do not always get sufficient opportunities to apply their skills to problem solving activities. In addition, some tasks are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure that the most able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good. It carefully explains what pupils are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Marking was most effective when pupils were encouraged to correct their errors and respond to teachers' comments. However, this practice is not applied consistently across the school and as a result some pupils continue to make the same errors.
- The school has invested in high levels of skilled and dedicated teaching assistants to support pupils' learning inside and outside the classroom, especially for those pupils requiring extra support to help them learn well. They liaise closely with teachers and are often responsible for small-group and one-to-one tuition. They are skilled and highly effective in giving pupils a boost to their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and carers unanimously agree with this. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school and extremely polite and courteous. For example, all pupils make sure they let adults go through doors first. Pupils loved talking to inspectors about their work or reading to them.
- Pupils take on responsibilities with pride. This includes, for example, being a representative on the school council, escorting visitors round the school or helping to tend the school's flower beds around the outdoor classroom.
- All adults have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Adults show a high level of respect and care for pupils. This is reciprocated by the pupils' respect towards adults and each other. There are some pupils who at times find managing their own behaviour very difficult but through the school's excellent provision they are helped to overcome difficulties and learn how to control themselves in response to demanding situations and the behaviour of others.
- Teachers and support staff are consistent in their management of behaviour. They successfully help pupils with behavioural difficulties to understand what is expected of them so that there is minimal disruption to lessons.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. All groups of pupils feel very safe and well cared for and highly confident of adult support should they need it.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Pupils and their parents say incidents are rare and they know they can talk to a member of staff if they are concerned about anything. School records confirm this.
- The school has recently developed the 'Oasis Room' which provides a very secure and caring environment, offering tailor-made provision designed to meet the specific needs of a few pupils

who, because of their emotional and social development, cannot always cope with a busy classroom. This resource has been highly successful in turning around pupils' behaviour, raising their self-esteem and helping them to play a full part in the life of the school.

- Pupils are taught how to keep safe when using the internet, crossing the road and what they should do if approached by a stranger.
- Attendance has improved significantly since last year and is now average. Persistent absence has also been much reduced. This is the consequence of resolute and imaginative leadership by the headteacher and the school's well-being coordinator and good parent cooperation.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, with a clear and uncompromising focus on the school's stated aim of developing the whole child through excellent provision. She has created a successful and highly motivated team who share her vision for the school. There are many positive comments from staff in support of this, for example, 'Every day sees a different challenge but the strong team spirit in our school makes us strive to do the best we can. The pupils are fantastic and make it all worth doing'.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body work closely together sharing an ambition and understanding of how to make the school even better. They focus their actions for development on a solid understanding of what the school is good at and what it needs to do to continue to improve.
- The school has very successfully developed a tier of middle leaders. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects they lead and contribute effectively to raising standards across the curriculum.
- The headteacher has put in place an exceptionally robust system to check the quality of teaching and for managing staff performance. Clear targets are set and staff are given support and training to ensure they are well placed to meet them. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the level of support they get to develop their professional skills.
- The curriculum makes learning enjoyable and enables pupils to develop their basic skills well. The numerous opportunities for pupils to work together, broaden their understanding with visitors to the school such as poets and authors, and go on trips and residential visits, promotes their learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupils, parents and carers really appreciate the broad range of after-school activities on offer, such as musical and artistic opportunities, which further contribute to pupils' cultural development. Opportunities to discuss moral issues are found not only in assembly themes but also when pupils are discussing carefully chosen books.
- The school makes effective use of the additional primary school sports funding. Money is spent on increasing opportunities for inter-school sport, extending the range of after-school activities and for staff to work alongside specialist coaches to develop their own skills.
- The local authority knows the school well and has confidence in the school's ability to improve. It is committed to providing high-quality support for the school as necessary.
- There are excellent links with parents. Inspectors met and spoke with parents at the start of the school day and held a formal meeting with eight others. The overwhelming view is that parents are exceptionally pleased with the education, care and support their children receive. This was exemplified by one parent and supported by others who said, 'It's great. It just keeps on getting better. This is a school which never gives up on its children'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about what the school is doing well and what needs to be improved. They demonstrate understanding of information about progress. They are passionate about the school and committed to supporting the social and emotional needs of pupils. They visit the school regularly to gain first-hand experience of the work of the school. They know about the quality of teaching and how the school's performance management systems help to improve the quality of teaching. Pay increases are only agreed where

teachers' performance is good. This understanding enables governors to be both challenging and supportive of the senior leadership team. They allocate and track finances carefully to evaluate the outcomes of spending, for example, they ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent appropriately and they are well informed about the impact this funding is having. They also check that the additional funding for sport is having the intended impact. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding and child protection procedures meet 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	119221
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	444129

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Gallagher
Headteacher	Jenny Hetherington
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2011
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