

Shevington Vale Primary School

Runshaw Avenue, Appley Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 9JP

Inspection dates

12–13 January 2017

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 executive headteacher provides passionate and determined leadership. She, and the previous headteacher, created a culture in which pupils are respected and cared for. As one parent said, 'A very family feel to the school from the moment you walk through the door. Every child is known and nurtured.'
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. They make good progress because the teaching is well planned and structured to develop children's skills and understanding.
- Leaders have successfully improved the teaching of writing and mathematics since the previous inspection and have raised standards.
- Teaching is most effective in reading, geography and French but less effective in science and history. Pupils' historical understanding and skills are underdeveloped. Teaching in experimental science requires improvement, as does pupils' writing up of investigations.
- Assessment has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers and assistants check on pupils' learning in lessons thoroughly and use this information to set more complex activities.
- In the recent past, pupils' outcomes have required improvement. Across the school, most pupils now make good progress from their average starting points.
- Subject leaders, particularly in history and science, have not identified weaknesses in teaching or in pupils' outcomes.
- Children who are looked after have high attendance and make good progress. The attendance and achievement of pupils who are disadvantaged are improving. Attendance overall is above average.
- Very few most-able pupils in the past have been challenged enough to attain the highest standards. There are signs that this trend has reversed but there is still some way to go for this group of pupils to attain the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils behave well. They said that they can concentrate in lessons and they enjoy break- and lunchtimes. They feel safe from bullying, name-calling and unkind messages online.
- The governing body has a strategic overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has made decisions that have helped to shape the culture and ethos at Shevington Vale.
- The governing body, however, does not have a system to check its statutory duties. At the start of the inspection, the website, the curriculum and other aspects of provision did not meet requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards across the different subjects and in each year group by:
 - making sure that teachers focus on developing pupils' skills and knowledge in each subject
 - reviewing the quality of worksheets to ensure that activities extend pupils' thinking and provide space for pupils to write.
- Improve the impact of subject and middle leadership, particularly on teaching, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes in history and science, so that:
 - pupils' historical knowledge improves, as does their ability to put events, people and periods of history into chronological order
 - pupils' reporting in experimental science makes better use of technical vocabulary, scientific explanations and mathematical graphs and charts.
- Devise a system for the governing body to regularly check whether the school complies effectively with all of its statutory duties and to gather more precise assessment information by making sure that:
 - all of the contents of policies and of the website meet requirements at all times
 - the governing body has more detailed information about teaching and the curriculum, particularly in history and science, and about outcomes for groups of pupils at Shevington Vale.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The newly appointed executive headteacher provides passionate and determined leadership. Although only a few days into the job, she has been at the school in a different role. She has a thorough and detailed knowledge of the families at Shevington Vale, which helps her to provide pupils with the necessary care and support. Staff morale, as judged by the responses to Ofsted's survey, is high. Staff are keen and motivated and provide good role models for pupils. The school is popular with parents. A typical comment to the online survey was, 'The staff and headteacher are very friendly and approachable and the school has a very open family feel where everybody looks out for each other.'
- There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection, including the quality of assessment, the teaching of mathematics and the quality of equipment for pupils to use. The federation improvement plan includes the school but improvement planning does not fully reflect relative weaknesses in pupils' outcomes identified at Shevington Vale. Leaders have secured improvements by delivering effective training and through supportive performance management.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is increasingly effective and has reversed the weaknesses from 2015 and 2016. Middle leaders have been effective in improving teaching and pupils' outcomes in reading and writing.
- The curriculum is effective in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, French, geography, physical education (PE) and sport, where it enables pupils to build on their skills and knowledge and to be ready for secondary school.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils in history and science. Leaders had not identified relative weakness in teaching in these subjects. Teaching does not ensure that the skills and depth of knowledge identified in the national curriculum are fully covered. As a result, the history curriculum and the experimentation element of the science curriculum are not challenging enough. Some parents identified challenge for most-able pupils as an area for improvement in their response to the Parent View survey.
- British values are a key aspect of the curriculum. Pupils develop a good understanding of democracy within school and take an active role in changing aspects of school for the better. They debate and discuss issues and bring items for the school to discuss in assemblies. They have a less well-established knowledge about democratic institutions such as local councils and members of parliament. The staff are successful in encouraging pupils to respect people from different countries, races and religions, as well as people who have different sexualities, genders or abilities. The curriculum, however, is over-dominated by White men in history, science, music and art. There are few women studied in the curriculum or people from different ethnicities and religions.
- The school makes good use of the PE and sport premium. The sports coach enables teachers to learn how to teach sport skills, thus providing a legacy for the future. He has increased the number of pupils involved in competitive sport and increased the range of extra-curricular clubs available.

- The school has spent the pupil premium grant wisely. Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment are in line with those of other pupils nationally and in the school. There is a need to target the grant more to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged middle-ability pupils to challenge them to become higher attainers.
- The school is outward looking and has approached external specialists, including the local authority, for support. As a result of the support, provision and children's outcomes in the early years have improved, as has the quality of teaching in writing. In other aspects, external support from the local authority has not been useful. The school's information report for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities follows the Wigan model but at the start of the inspection did not meet national requirements. By the end of the inspection, all of the required information was present. The local authority's model for school-to-school support has not monitored provision well enough to be able to point out relative weaknesses to leaders.

Governance of the school

- The governing body maintains an effective strategic overview of the school and helps to shape its direction, culture and ethos. It has a general overview of the quality of teaching and of assessment information, including data, but this is not precise enough. This hampers the governing body's ability to make effective school-level decisions about staff deployment or the use of resources. This means, for example, that the governing body had not picked up in enough detail the concerns about boys' writing, the performance of the most able pupils or the quality of the curriculum in history and science.
- The governing body makes effective strategic decisions for the whole federation. Governors ask challenging questions to leaders and often wrestle with and strongly debate decisions to be made. They are knowledgeable and are able to bring good support and guidance to school leaders.
- At the start of the inspection, governors had not ensured that the correct information was presented on the website, to ensure that the national curriculum was followed and the policies contain the required information. By the end of the inspection, almost all of the policies and details on the website had been corrected but there is no system for checking whether the school complies with its obligations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe in school and protected. They cited the high fence, security systems and the tight monitoring of pupils' use of websites as some of their reasons why they feel safe. Parents agree. A typical comment to Ofsted's survey was, 'Staff are approachable and the school provides a safe and friendly environment for learning.' Safeguarding has a high profile. Health and safety and child protection issues are discussed at each staff meeting and leaders update staff about any changes to or breaches in safeguarding. Staff are kept aware of safeguarding requirements through regular training.

- There is a good system to track pupils' attendance to make sure none is in danger of becoming missing in education. The school works well with other agencies such as social care and speech therapy services. Staff are resilient and determined despite healthcare workers not attending reviews. Children who are looked after are supported well and are safeguarded vigilantly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their good knowledge in English, mathematics, French and geography to plan effective lessons and activities that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. They give clear explanations and demonstrations. During the inspection, they made particularly good use of resources in science and French.
- The teaching of reading has been successful in raising the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in their use of phonics by the end of Year 1. Pupils read with intonation, confidence and fluency. In geography, for example, Year 5 pupils used their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent to successfully break down complicated town and place names from Ordnance Survey maps into different sounds.
- Pupils said that the teaching of writing had improved since the previous inspection. The new system, they said, enables them to think and talk about what to write, which helps them remember when they put pen to paper. There are also some good opportunities for pupils to write in geography. In contrast, their writing up of experiments in science is underdeveloped. Poorly chosen worksheets hamper the amount and the complexity of writing because pupils are only asked to write an odd word, phrase, caption or sentence. In addition, in science, the graphs, charts and mathematics are at a lower level than the pupils are using in mathematics lessons.
- Pupils said that the teaching of mathematics had also improved since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence agrees that activities are more challenging and pupils are asked to think about and explain their calculations and to solve more problems.
- Parents overwhelmingly believe that their child is taught well and receives appropriate homework.
- Assessment has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers and other adults monitor the room well to check on pupils' answers, thinking, ideas and understanding. In one example a teaching assistant in a science lesson alerted the teacher to a pupil's very good understanding of light, which enabled the teacher to take that pupil's knowledge and understanding further. Adults provide pupils with useful feedback to make pupils think and to improve their work. Pupils said to the inspector that they like the newly introduced assessment system as it helps them check on their own progress and learning.
- Teaching in history requires improvement. Teachers sometimes provide pupils with worksheets that contain historical inaccuracies or generalisations that harm the development of pupils' historical knowledge. Similarly, in their instructions and explanations, some teachers do not have the historical knowledge themselves to teach the subject. Pupils' writing in history is too simple for their abilities and pupils do not use the terminology or historical vocabulary that they should be learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are self-confident and articulate. This was demonstrated in an effective assembly which was led from start to finish by the 'young governors'. They asked for ideas about how to improve lunchtimes, accurately scribed pupils' responses and summed up the minutes that had been taken. Pupils readily take up roles and jobs around the school.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe. The overwhelming proportion of parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and protected, verified by pupils' own responses. Several staff have received training in paediatric first aid and there are few accidents. Pupils said that they felt safe because of the high fencing and very good monitoring of websites that they access.
- Pupils said, verified by logs of behaviour incidents, that there is no racism and anyone from a different country or racial background would be safe at the school. Similarly, they said that there was no homophobia or other types of name-calling. There have been a very small number of incidents of cyber-name-calling but they felt that the staff do a good job in preventing these from happening.
- Shevington Vale is inclusive and staff promote diversity well. They identified an issue in the community of negativity towards and misunderstanding about refugees so they embarked upon an effective programme of activities to build pupils' respect for and understanding of people seeking refuge.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Attendance overall is above average. The school's published performance information indicates that disadvantaged pupils in 2016 were frequently absent. However, some of these absences were because of significant medical needs or parents taking pupils on holiday against the school's wishes. Children who are looked after have excellent attendance.
- The overwhelming majority of parents feel that the school does a good job in making sure that pupils are well behaved. Pupils said that around school at lunch- and breaktimes, behaviour is good because there is more equipment to use and play with and because people show each other respect.
- Pupils and staff said that behaviour has improved in the last two years. Pupils are now respectful, self-regulating and use good manners. They are a credit to the school. Their good behaviour plays a significant part in the good progress they make because teachers lose little time in getting their classes to listen or respond. Pupils are keen and attentive, work well collaboratively and readily share equipment, resources and roles. Occasionally pupils lose interest in their work and become fidgety.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress made by pupils currently on roll is good. It marks a considerable improvement on outcomes in the past two years, when pupils' attainment and progress had required improvement. Boys' writing and pupils' achievement in mathematics had been concerns, as had the attainment of the most able pupils. These issues are now being addressed and progress is accelerating.
- Pupils' work and the school's assessment information indicate that they are now making good progress in writing. One boy, typical of many, at the start of the year could only write short, very simple sentences of a quality below the standard expected for his age. By the end of the autumn term he was catching up and writing more complex sentences with accurate punctuation. Pupils' writing in history and science requires improvement. In these subjects pupils write only basic sentences with overly simple vocabulary.
- In reading there has been an increase in pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics. In class, pupils make plausible spellings using their knowledge of the sounds that letters represent when they read and when they spell. Year 1 pupils, for example, made very good attempts at writing 'chocolate,' 'summer' and 'heat'. Pupils in older year groups also use their phonics knowledge to read and to spell tricky words.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress is quickening and their attainment rising. The executive headteacher has identified the weaknesses and has identified training needs for staff in developing pupils' skills in problem solving and thinking about mathematics. Throughout the school in mathematics, a higher proportion of pupils than in the last two years of published assessment information are working at the expected level for their age and a higher proportion are working at greater depth. In 2016, for example, the current Year 3 class attained above-average standards in mathematics. Pupils told inspectors that they are solving more problems than they have done in the past and are asked much more than they used to be to explain their answers, methods and thinking.
- In science, pupils develop the scientific knowledge and understanding they need to be ready to take on the subject at secondary school but the investigative science requires improvement. The quality of scientific diagrams, charts, measures and graphs is not high enough. Similarly, their explanations, conclusions from data and their scientific writing are too simple.
- In history, pupils' understanding of how time periods, civilisations and people fit in chronological order is underdeveloped. This in part is because of how the curriculum has been devised. In contrast, pupils' use of geographical terminology and vocabulary is good. They routinely consult maps and keys and develop their understanding of physical and social geography. Their writing about volcanoes, for example, was complex and full of geographical terminology.

- There are very few pupils identified as disadvantaged, which means that published assessment information can be misleading. The children who are looked after make good progress and achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils make average progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The staff recognise that more needs to be done to challenge as well as nurture this group of pupils so that more of them attain the highest standards. The school had not, until this inspection, precisely identified their barriers to learning and progress, which means that although the pupil premium grant has been spent effectively, it could have been targeted more precisely.
- There are very few pupils who have special educational needs and none has a disability. Overall, this group makes good progress, but for a very small number, the small-group work and targeted teaching have not been successful. This is in part because the extra support has not been aimed precisely enough at each pupil's needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Teaching and pupils' activities are well structured and planned to enable children to learn well and have a positive experience throughout the Reception Year. Children concentrate and persevere on activities and select their resources and equipment themselves. Outdoors, for example, a group of boys and girls worked well with construction materials, manipulating saws and other resources to create a 'spaceship.' Other children spontaneously created games or recounted songs relating to their current work on animals. Children enjoy and celebrate their successes and achievements.
- The curriculum is interesting and has a positive impact on children's learning. The teacher, in the summer holidays, asks parents to create a summer scrapbook detailing children's likes, dislikes, skills, knowledge and important information. These books are then used effectively to shape the topics and the learning over the year. The topic on animals, for example, emanated from the scrapbooks indicating children's interests in animals.
- Transition into Reception is smooth and well managed. As one parent commented, 'The transition to school (from the on-site Nursery provider) was a very easy one.' Transition into Year 1 is also smooth. Children learn in the summer how to get ready for how Year 1 pupils learn. Assessments of what children know and can do are verified and checked by the Year 1 and the Reception teacher together. This allows the Year 1 teacher to know exactly what to start teaching at the beginning of September; children are ready and well prepared for Year 1.
- Children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception has increased in each of the last four years and in 2016 was above the national average.
- Children's reading skills are above those of other children nationally by the end of Reception, although some pronunciations of sounds that letters or groups of letters represent are not always accurate.

- Children's attendance is good at over 95%. They are taught successfully how to use good manners, and to be polite and follow Reception's rules and regulations including how to act safely. Their behaviour is good, although there is some fidgeting and messing around, particularly when having to wait for an adult.
- Children are safe and well looked after and protected by staff. Children are involved in daily risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor areas and this is an excellent part of the school's provision.
- The early years leader made amendments to teaching and to the curriculum by analysing assessment information from the last few years. She increased the number of writing opportunities there are because the assessments indicated that boys' writing lags behind other areas of learning by the end of Reception. These actions appear to have been successful and boys' writing is improving.
- Diversity is promoted well through the curriculum, particularly in relation to gender, race and religion. For example, boys were cast as angels and girls as wise men and shepherdesses in the Christmas nativity performance. Children selected their own roles in the performances.
- The early years leader works well with colleagues in other schools. For example, she attends briefings and assessment moderations to ensure that termly judgements are in line with those of other schools. There are also good links with training providers.
- Monitoring by the early years leader has not picked up some aspects of practice that should be improved. Adults in the early years do not always pronounce the sounds that letters represent correctly and so although children make good progress in reading, they pronounce some of the sounds incorrectly.
- The school has not been served well by the system to record assessment used by the local authority. Children clearly enter with skills and levels of development that are typical for four- and five-year-olds, yet the local authority tracker records their 'on-entry' skills as well below average. As a result, the school has an overly positive assessment about the quality of provision and outcomes for children.

School details

Unique reference number	106429
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10024350

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerard Hurst
Interim executive headteacher	Karen Tomlinson
Telephone number	01257 253559
Website	www.shevingtonvale.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@admin.shevingtonvale.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2013

Information about this school

- By the end of the inspection, the school met the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Shevington Vale, Millbrook and Shevington primary schools form a federation. They share an executive headteacher, a leadership team and a governing body. The executive headteacher retired at Christmas and at the time of the inspection the interim executive headteacher had been in post for only a few days. Two newly appointed assistant headteachers had also only been in post for a few days.
- Shevington Vale is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and there are currently none who have a disability.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides early years education on a full-time basis in a Reception class. There is a privately run nursery on the school site which is inspected separately. Its report is available on the Ofsted website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with a range of staff, including the headteacher, the federation's inclusion manager and the newly appointed assistant headteachers, as well as six members of the governing body. Seven members of staff completed the online survey and their views were taken into account.
- The inspector met with two groups of pupils as well as talking informally with pupils throughout the inspection. No pupils completed Ofsted's online survey.
- To gather the views of parents, the inspector considered the 75 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector observed teaching in each class across a range of subjects, including science, French, history, mathematics and English. He also scrutinised pupils' work to see what learning and progress have been like since September 2016.
- The inspector met with the headteacher of the cluster of local schools that represents the local authority.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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