

Inspection of Shaw-cum-Donnington C.E. Primary School

Love Lane, Donnington, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2JG

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This village school is the heart of the community. Warm friendships flourish across all age groups, creating a strong sense of belonging. Older pupils carry out their role as 'buddy' to Reception children with diligence. Pupils feel safe and happy at school. Staff nurture pupils thoughtfully, creating a positive and inclusive environment.

Pupils behave well in class and in the playground. They follow routines responsibly, such as walking to the village hall for lunch. Pupils act sensibly, are polite and are great role models for each other. They love winning gems as recognition for working hard and persevering.

The school has high expectations of its pupils. Staff are unwavering in their belief that every pupil can and will succeed. They know their pupils well. Getting learning right for every pupil drives the staff of this school. As a result, pupils learn successfully. They are fully prepared for the next stages in their education.

Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of enrichment that broaden their horizons and support their personal development. They enjoy educational visits such as visits to museums, the theatre and places of worship. Pupils value their residential trip, challenging themselves as they learn new skills such as abseiling.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders at all levels, including governors, have steered the school through a period of change very successfully. The staff team has embraced the changes. They are deeply committed to delivering high-quality education and developing professionally. Targeted training has enhanced practice. Experienced governors know the school well. They offer constructive challenge and support to help realise the school's ambitions for its pupils. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' support in this small-school setting where they take on multiple roles and responsibilities.

The school has developed a balanced and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils well. The school has considered how to build learning over time for the mixed-age group classes carefully. Right from the start in early years, there is a sharp focus on vocabulary. Pupils develop their confidence to use this new vocabulary through discussion activities in lessons.

A love of learning takes root in the early years. Children make an excellent start. They thrive academically and in their personal growth. They are fully involved in the meaningful activities provided indoors and outdoors. Well-trained staff check children's starting points accurately and build on them expertly. The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They work closely with external professionals. Staff provide carefully tailored support. As a result, pupils with SEND access the curriculum alongside their classmates successfully.

Pupils benefit from a strong reading culture. The school's phonics programme is now fully embedded. Pupils swiftly learn the knowledge they need to be able to blend sounds together to read words. They quickly become confident, fluent readers. Pupils get the help they need to catch up. Pupils read books from a wide range of diverse texts. Pupils confidently talk about their favourite books, especially mystery stories and joke books. They love listening to stories and poems.

Learning takes place in calm, orderly classrooms. Pupils show pride in their work and a strong motivation to achieve. A wide range of teaching strategies are now embedded. Teachers spot any misunderstandings well. They have strong subject knowledge. They explain and present information clearly. Pupils value the 'flashback' sessions across the curriculum. These help pupils remember key content over time. Pupils produce work of a high-quality across a range of different subjects. However, in a few subjects in the wider curriculum, task design does not fully support pupils to think deeply about their learning. Whereas, pupils recall facts well, they are less secure in applying their subject-specific skills independently.

The school takes prompt action when a pupil's attendance causes concern. Consequently, attendance is in line with national averages. Pupils' understanding of the importance of attending school regularly is improving. The school knows it must continue to raise attendance further for some pupils.

Pupils relish their leadership opportunities. These roles help develop their communication skills and sense of responsibility. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to care for their well-being. They play an active role in supporting local and national charities. The school council is currently leading efforts to support a local homelessness charity. Pupils show care for others beyond their village community. In early years, staff model important social skills, such as how to share. Children learn how to get on well with their friends.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the activities pupils are given do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to think deeply, reason and solve problems independently. This means that, in those subjects, pupils are not learning as well as they could. The school should review its curriculum so that pupils develop their independent learning skills and deepen their knowledge, subject-specific skills and understanding over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109974
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10341253
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louis Thatcher
Headteacher	Lindsay Wakefield
Website	www.shaw.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her substantive role in February 2024. The assistant headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Oxford. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2018. The next section 48 inspection will be next academic year.
- Currently, eight nursery-age children attend the school part-time.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, a representative of the local authority and other school leaders. The lead inspector also met with five members of the governing body, including the chair. She held a phone conversation with a representative of the Diocese of Oxford.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to members of staff.
- The inspectors also spoke to pupils and looked at samples of work in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and the school development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupils' surveys. An inspector spoke with parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour in school. Inspectors considered how the school is supporting pupils' personal development.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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