

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Shears Green Infant School

Packham Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7JF

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

Outcome

Shears Green Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of this school is Clare Holder. This school is part of Hornchurch Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Chris Hobson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gillian Thumpston. There is also an executive head of school, Sarah Warshow, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Shears Green Infant School is welcoming. Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They have kind friends to play with. Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful and nurturing. Staff listen and swiftly address any worries pupils may have. This helps pupils to feel valued and happy. Pupils also work hard. They are proud to share their artwork inspired by the artist Piet Mondrian.

Staff expect pupils to behave well, and pupils meet this expectation. Classrooms are purposeful places to learn. Pupils play well during social times. The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement across a range of subjects. However, at the end of Year 1 in 2024, some pupils were not secure in their understanding of phonics. Therefore, some pupils were not as well prepared as they could be for the next stage of their education. The newly established leadership team and trustees have taken swift and appropriate action to raise standards in early reading. Therefore, pupils now benefit from high-quality phonics teaching.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn about faiths and cultures that may be different to their own. Children in the Reception Year learn about the festival of Diwali through dance. These experiences support pupils to value difference.

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

The school places a strong emphasis on the teaching of reading. Children are taught to read as soon as they join the Reception Year. This is because the school wants all pupils to read with confidence and without delay. Staff have received effective training to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Books are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils know. Therefore, pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), read with increasing fluency. Pupils regularly revise the sounds that staff have taught them. This typically helps teaching staff to identify and support any pupils who need help to keep up with their classmates.

The curriculum is well sequenced. The trust has identified the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that it expects pupils to know year-on-year. Pupils in Year 2 solve mathematical word problems successfully because their teachers have taught them how to share amounts equally. In the Reception Year, children quickly identify one more than a given number. They use their fingers to show what each number represents. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain new vocabulary and concepts clearly. However, on a few occasions, the checking of what pupils know and understand is not timely enough. This means that some pupils have gaps in their learning, and this hampers their progress.

The school is determined that pupils with SEND will achieve well. There are appropriate processes in place to identify pupils with SEND early on in their education. The school works effectively with external professionals. These include speech and language therapists who provide staff with targeted training. However, on a few occasions, teaching approaches are not adapted well enough for some pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not consistently learn the intended curriculum as well as they could.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Learning is not interrupted by any inappropriate behaviour. Staff teach pupils how to manage their feelings and to collaborate well with their classmates. This starts in early years, where children learn the importance of taking turns and sharing. Those pupils who may need additional help, to explain how they are feeling, receive effective support to do so.

The wider curriculum is well considered. The school aims for pupils to be responsible, honest members of the community. Pupils are given opportunities to practise democracy by voting for their classmates to be school councillors. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility. For example, line monitors proudly model 'wonderful walking' along corridors. School councillors worked collaboratively with school leaders to decide on 16 memorable opportunities for pupils to experience by the end of Year 2, such as learning to play a musical instrument. There are a range of clubs on offer, including choir, yoga and painting club. These are well attended and widen pupils' experiences.

Pupils are taught how to identify risk. They know not to publish personal information online. Pupils learn about consent in an age-appropriate manner. They explain that a good friend shows 'kindness' and 'respect'.

Trustees are very ambitious for the school. They understand what the school is doing well and what they need to do to make the school even better. Trustees have appropriate processes in place to check the school's effectiveness. Staff are extremely positive about the school. They speak highly of the initiatives in place to manage their workload and support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers' checking of pupils' understanding is not as sharp as it could be. This means that sometimes pupils do not learn the intended curriculum content as well as they could. The school should continue to strengthen classroom practice so that misunderstandings and gaps are identified and addressed swiftly, enabling pupils to consistently learn and remember more.
- Sometimes teachers do not adapt their teaching approaches well enough to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND. This hampers some pupils' progress. The school should ensure that activities and teaching approaches are adapted effectively so all pupils achieve well.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Shears Green Infant School, to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2013.

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	148918
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341909
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Thumpston
CEO of the trust	Chris Hobson
Headteacher	Clare Holder (Head of school)
Website	www.shearsgreeninfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Shears Green Infant School converted to become an academy school in July 2022. When its predecessor school, Shears Green Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- This school is part of the Hornchurch Academy Trust, which consists of six schools.
- The acting head of school has been in post since September 2024.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss school development.
- The inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and with the CEO.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to pupils' wider development and behaviour and attendance. The inspector also met with groups of staff and pupils to discuss these aspects of the school's work.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.
- The views of staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Walters, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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