

# Shatterlocks Infant School

Heathfield Avenue, Dover, Kent, CT16 2PB

## Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
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 good school is improving rapidly. It is regarded well by pupils, staff and parents who speak very highly of it.
- It is a very happy place. Classrooms are bright and colourful, showing the breadth of learning at every stage in the school. Outdoor areas give pupils excellent opportunities to learn and socialise together.
- The emphasis given to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps pupils to establish strong relationships with adults and one another.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Children make an outstanding start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop a love of learning.
- Staff build well on this foundation and pupils make good progress overall through Years 1 and 2. They make outstanding progress in mathematics. Standards are around those found nationally and are rising quickly.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Staff know their pupils very well as individuals and plan the right work for them. Any pupils at risk of falling behind are helped to catch up quickly.
- Leadership is strong and well respected. Senior leaders and directors have been very successful in establishing the academy as an improving school.
- Staff work closely with colleagues across the federation of schools to broaden expertise and give pupils a wide range of exciting experiences.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not consistently apply the spelling and handwriting skills learned in their 'key skills' lessons to enable them to produce writing of a higher quality in other subjects.
- Teachers do not always pick up pupils' errors and misconceptions, particularly in their writing in other subjects, or require pupils to correct their work and respond to the comments in teachers' marking.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with senior leaders, who also joined inspectors on a series of shorter visits to lessons. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils, two directors and the Chairman of the Trustees of the Dover Federation for the Arts Multi Academy Trust.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, along with the outcomes of conversations with parents during the inspection and the school’s recent parental survey. The responses made in 17 staff questionnaires were analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including information on the progress of groups of pupils, nationally published assessment data, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding information, and records relating to teachers’ performance management.

## Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector

Carol Vant

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is high. This is additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, those looked after by the local authority or those from families with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs daily breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Shatterlocks Infant School converted to become an academy school in June 2012. When its predecessor school, Shatterlocks Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is part of the Dover Federation for the Arts Multi-Academy Trust, which runs a federation of four schools working together, sharing staff expertise and training. The Trust is led by four trustees and managed by a Board of Directors, which includes the trustees.
- The principal also has responsibility for the leadership of Barton Junior School, another school within the federation.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils meeting and exceeding the standards reached nationally in reading and writing by ensuring that:
  - teachers and pupils have the same high expectations for pupils to apply their spelling and handwriting in all writing as they do when pupils practise these skills in their 'key skills' lessons
  - marking consistently picks up pupils' misconceptions and that pupils are given more short tasks which help them to carry out the next steps indicated in teachers' marking.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress through their time in the school. Their attainment at the end of Year 2 is improving because of changes made to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) so that pupils are reading more quickly, which helps their learning in other subjects.
- Children join the school with a very wide range of skills and understanding, but for most it is below, and sometimes well below, that expected for their age. Children's speech and language skills are particularly weak.
- Throughout the school, there is a very strong emphasis on identifying the individual difficulties that children have, and planning activities to improve their skills as quickly as possible.
- In Nursery and Reception, there is a particular focus on encouraging children to talk about what they are doing to improve their speech and extend their vocabulary. As a result, children of all abilities make very rapid progress in all aspects of their learning through this stage. This striking progress was seen in the work of some more-able children in Reception, who had progressed from making marks representing letters in September to being able to write a couple of sentences with recognisable words and punctuation by the end of March.
- Teachers build well on these foundations through Years 1 and 2, so that overall attainment by the end of Year 2 is in line with that found nationally. Attainment in mathematics has been stronger than in reading and writing. Pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics, where standards are now above those found nationally, helping to prepare them exceptionally well for Key Stage 2.
- A closer emphasis on teaching the skills of reading and writing has proved very effective and is helping to close the gap with mathematics. Currently, many more pupils are working at higher levels in their reading than previously. Nevertheless, fewer pupils make the very rapid progress in their reading and writing that is found in mathematics.
- Pupils develop their reading and writing well in their 'key skills' lessons, for example, showing good handwriting and spelling. They do not always transfer these skills well when writing stories or in other subjects. Often pupils are keen to get all their ideas down on paper quickly and teachers do not set clear enough expectations for the highest possible quality in pupils' writing.
- Pupils develop a love of reading because of the way the school encourages pupils to enjoy stories and books. An exciting range of books are readily available for pupils to read in comfortable book corners around the school, outside at lunchtime and in the before- and after-school clubs. Pupils use their knowledge of letters, sounds and punctuation to break down and blend sounds for themselves and to understand meaning in their reading.
- The school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity is reflected in the equally good progress made by all groups of pupils. This includes pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and more-able pupils.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through additional funding receive the individual support they need to ensure that they make the same good progress as others, and sometimes better. The gap in the standards of these pupils and their peers is narrower and their attainment is higher than this group's nationally.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers encourage pupils to become inquisitive and enjoy learning.
- There is a consistent approach to making sure that pupils are clear about what they are learning, including having simple learning objectives written in pupils' books. Pupils regularly reflect on their own success in their learning at the end of the lesson by drawing happy or sad faces to indicate to the teacher how easy or difficult they found their tasks.

- Teachers know their pupils very well and plan work at a level which takes their learning forward quickly. For example, in the Nursery, children develop their language quickly because activities are linked to real-life situations. They begin to learn to write within their imaginative play, as seen when they used clipboards to take meal orders, asking clearly 'What would you like on your pancake?'
- Pupils discuss their learning with adults regularly and know the quality of their work. They are keen to move forward and see their progression charted clearly on their target grids.
- Teachers' marking is regular and encourages pupils by indicating exactly what they have achieved. They often set 'next steps' for pupils but then do not routinely give them additional tasks or opportunities to achieve these. Occasionally, particularly when marking writing in other subjects, teachers do not pick up important misconceptions and errors, such as key grammar or poor number formation.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and communication skills by taking every possible opportunity to encourage pupils to talk about their work. For example, in a lesson introducing the concept of halving numbers, pupils talked to each other about what they already knew. In this lesson, learning was made particularly exciting with an emphasis on accuracy so that 'Aladdin could retrieve his wishes lost in an earlier session'.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They question pupils well and encourage them to think through things for themselves. Pupils benefit greatly from working under the close supervision of an adult. However, rather than responding to a series of prompts from an adult, pupils do not always have enough activities which require them to build resilience and check their understanding by working through tasks on their own.
- Parents responding on Parent View were unanimous in their view that their children are taught well and make good progress. Parents are kept informed about how pupils learn in school and are given useful advice in newsletters and workshops to help them to extend children's learning at home.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's commitment to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development encourages them to develop strong relationships with adults and one another. They are keen to look after each other. Consequently, pupils are very happy and thoroughly enjoy school and contribute well to the harmonious school community.
- From their earliest days in the school, children learn to share ideas, help each other and listen to one another's views respectfully. For example, in Nursery and Reception, children learn the importance of taking turns, and of good manners.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their work in school. They are eager to learn and do their very best because adults make work interesting for them. They develop early study skills, for example, knowing that they must use their understanding of the sounds that letters make to try to spell words without frequently asking for help from an adult.
- In the playground, pupils play together very happily. The exceptionally wide range of playground activities mean that there is always something to do and someone to play with. Pupils were observed sustaining play for lengthy periods in activities such as large-scale games of snakes and ladders or reading together in the outdoor library. On the few occasions when pupils find it difficult to maintain the school's high expectations, adults ensure that any behaviour which challenges the enjoyment of others is dealt with effectively.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that there is very little bullying in the school, and parents agree. Pupils know exactly what to do if there are any issues that worry them. The school's records show that the use of discriminatory or derogatory language is extremely rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when on the beach or when using the internet, because these issues are dealt with regularly in school.
- The school's work to build strong and supportive relationships with parents has been very

successful in improving attendance over the last three years, particularly reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Attendance is above average.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- Since becoming an academy, the focused drive of the principal and vice-principal has resulted in improved achievement for pupils, and particularly in the standards being reached by pupils now in the school. Pupils are well prepared for Key Stage 2. The consistent approaches used in the infant, junior and secondary schools in the federation lead to a smooth transfer to later learning.
- There is a collective approach to school improvement across the federation, and staff share a clear vision of where improvements can be made, and of their own part within this. Staff morale is very high, with staff proud of their work and ambitious to make it even more effective.
- Leaders at all levels in the school share in monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' achievements. Pupils' progress is checked regularly against the targets set for them, and prompt action is taken to close any gaps. This ensures that individuals and groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are given the support they need to succeed in their learning.
- The curriculum is planned carefully around themes that excite and motivate pupils because of the emphasis on first-hand experiences. This is evident in the stimulating and vibrant displays in classrooms, giving information and celebrating pupils' work. The weekly event given over to whole-school learning and regular visits linked to curriculum themes have a particular impact on broadening pupils' knowledge and understanding. The visit during the week of the inspection for pupils to see and understand the characteristics of owls and how they fly and search for prey was followed up well, for example, when pupils considered how maps are reflections of 'a bird's-eye view'.
- The close links with others in the federation means that staff have the regular support of colleagues and access to expertise beyond the school. Staff participate fully in training planned carefully to meet school and Trust needs. The trustees, rightly, have confidence in how the principal is leading the school and bringing about improvement.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents, some of whom have been reluctant to engage with other support services. Parents are given a warm welcome in the school and their views are sought regularly. Parents who completed the online questionnaire on Parent View were unanimously supportive of the school, a similar picture to the school's own surveys.
- The school promotes exercise and healthy living very effectively. It uses additional funding for sport to provide a wide range of after-school clubs run by specialists, and these are helping pupils to keep active. Projects promoting family exercise and cooking are improving well-being and helping pupils to develop good habits for their future health.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Board of Directors is well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. Directors have a good working knowledge of the information about pupils' progress and know how well pupils do in relation to pupils nationally. Directors are led by an experienced Chair and understand how the school runs on a day-to-day basis because of regular visits. They use this knowledge effectively when making strategic decisions. For example, additional staffing has been put in place to support families who are experiencing difficulties in their lives to ensure that any barriers to pupils' learning are identified and addressed. They ensure that financial resources are effectively managed. For example, directors check that pupils supported through pupil premium funding are improving their achievement and that the attainment gap between this group and others is narrowing year on year. They know how the management of teachers' performance is linked to pupils' performance and reflected in the salary structure. Directors keep policy under constant review, and ensure that arrangements to safeguard pupils and staff meet statutory requirements, and that records are kept rigorously.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138170
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	441143

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Trustees of the Dover Federation for the Arts Multi Academy Trust
<b>Chair</b>	John Peall
<b>Principal</b>	David Meades
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 204264
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