

# Inspection of Sheriffhales Primary School

Sheriffhales, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8RA

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Inspection dates: 3 and 6 March 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love coming to school and enjoy their learning. Most of those spoken to said art was their favourite subject. There have been rapid improvements since the acting headteacher took up her post in the autumn term, which parents and carers much appreciate. Standards, especially in reading and writing, were very low last year. Outcomes in all year groups in writing are improving quickly from a very low base. This is because of leaders' high ambitions. It is still early days in reading. Leaders know that they are not there yet for all pupils to do as well as they can in other subjects.

Pupils experience a full range of subjects, enriched by the services of a specialist physical education (PE) coach and a musician. Extra-curricular activities include a school band and a 'Boogie Nights' dance performance. Trips, such as to Warwick Castle, enhance pupils' knowledge of the past. Children's learning in the early years setting is not yet good enough. Resources are limited and the learning environment is underdeveloped.

Pupils confirmed that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. They feel safe and there is 'always an adult to talk to if needed'. Pupils behave well in class and around school. They live up to the school value, demonstrating 'pride in our differences.'

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

Led by the inspiration of the acting headteacher, leaders are ambitious for pupils to do well. In their short time in post, they have made significant progress towards addressing identified shortcomings in planning the curriculum. A sequenced programme of study is now in place, covering a full range of subjects. Some plans have been very recently implemented. There are strengths in the curriculum provision for music and PE, where teachers benefit and learn from specialists.

Leaders have put in place a new appropriate phonics reading scheme. They ensure all teachers follow the same programme. Most pupils have books matched to the letters and sounds they know. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the teaching of early reading, which leaders are addressing. Consequently, not all pupils have gained the knowledge and skills they need to be confident readers.

Leaders recognise that provision in the early years is weak. They have made a start in making changes to address this, such as providing access to activities outside. However, not enough has been done to address shortfalls. Leaders have started to make better use of children's responses to learning, to plan what to teach next.

There has been quick and significant improvement in pupils' writing in all year groups in English and other literacy-based subjects. Where pupils, including some older ones, were struggling to form recognisable words and could barely write

sentences, they are now writing in full paragraphs and with greater accuracy on topics such as evolution and explorers.

Leaders' checks on pupils' learning and governors' oversight of the impact of wider curriculum subjects are developing. The extent to which leaders are checking how well pupils are doing is rigorous in English and mathematics but less so in other subjects. Where schemes of work are still relatively new, there is less impact on how much pupils know in some subjects, such as geography.

Adaptions to the curriculum and the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are of variable quality. This support ranges from highly effective to that of more limited benefit.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their lessons and are ready to learn. Lessons are largely free of low-level disruption, and pupils work well together, including those in mixed-age classes.

Pupils' understanding of terms such as 'British values' and 'democracy' is limited. There are few opportunities for pupils to take part in decision-making, such as voting. However, they demonstrate positive values in respecting people with different kinds of relationships and backgrounds. They understand about the rule of law. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities in PE and music, but elsewhere the range is more limited.

In such a small school, each member of staff takes on several roles. Leaders are mindful of this, but this means some leaders take a large share of leadership responsibilities, leading to increased workload.

Governors and representatives from the local authority are acutely aware of where they need to secure further improvements in areas of the school's work that are not yet good enough. They have set out an appropriate action plan of key priorities. They fully support the acting headteacher in taking the long-term decisions needed for the school, as do the rest of the staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and the wider staff are well trained to ensure that pupils in need of early help are identified and receive it quickly. A new system to record concerns helps leaders to respond to issues promptly. Where necessary, leaders engage well with securing additional support. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure new staff are recruited safely and for responding to allegations, should any arise. Leaders are acutely aware of local risks, including far-right extremism, and of the dangers of social media. Pupils are also aware of the risks and know what to do if they receive contact from a stranger or see anything inappropriate online.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Provision in early years is weak. As a result, children do not get off to be the best possible start in their learning. Leaders should take further measures to improve the quality of learning for children in the setting.
- Where curriculum plans have been introduced recently, leaders have not yet evaluated their impact or checked sufficiently how well pupils are doing. Leaders should ensure that appropriate assessment procedures are in place to enable them to check pupils' progress and see that the revised curriculum is having the intended impact.
- The quality of support for pupils with SEND and for others who need to catch up is variable and not consistently effective. As a result, some pupils receive appropriate adaptations to the curriculum, but others do not. Leaders should ensure that teachers and additional adults provide consistent targeted help to enable pupils with SEND to achieve well.
- Leaders do not do enough to help pupils to recognise and understand fundamental British values. This means, for example, that pupils do not have an understanding of what democracy means. Leaders should take steps to increase their knowledge and understanding and provide greater opportunities for pupils to take part in decision-making processes.

## 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 123396   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Shropshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10227077   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 86   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Sally Lil  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Justine Keeling-Paglia (acting headteacher)                                |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.sheriffhalesschool.org">www.sheriffhalesschool.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 25 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                   |

## Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher has been absent for much of the time since February 2022. There was an acting headteacher until their retirement in July 2022. The substantive headteacher returned from absence briefly in September 2022. The current acting headteacher has been in post since October 2022.
- The chair and vice-chair of the governing body were appointed in September 2022.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher and other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils, including a group of older girls.
- Inspectors met seven members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- An inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of a high proportion of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service and the online questionnaire. There were no responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English and music. They also looked at work in a number of other subjects, including PE, French, history, geography and science, as well as in the early years foundation stage. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Sims, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Ray

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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