Inspection of Shepeau Stow Primary School

Dowsdale Bank, Shepeau Stow, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 0TX

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Early years provision	**Requires improvement**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Shepeau Stow Primary School is a nurturing school where pupils feel welcome and included. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm. Pupils feel safe and cared for. Pupils know that they can share any concerns that they may have, and that staff will act on these quickly. Pupils are polite and treat each other with courtesy and respect. They play together happily during social times.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Since the previous inspection, much has been done to improve the quality of education. A well-planned curriculum is now in place in the majority of subjects. However, the school's curriculum is not taught consistently well, including in the early years. Learning does not build successfully on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from a range of carefully planned trips and experiences. They visit places that broaden their experiences of the wider world. Pupils visit different places of worship, for example a mandir, in order to broaden their knowledge of different faiths.

The majority of parents and carers are positive about the work of the school and would recommend it to others. Many commented on the supportive and welcoming ethos of the school.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has undertaken a lot of work to strengthen its leadership team and further develop its curriculum. This work includes the development of subject leadership expertise, checks of pupils' knowledge in wider curriculum subjects and changes to the governance of the school. However, some of this work has not yet led to pupils knowing and remembering more. Pupils tend to remember activities rather than the knowledge or skill that they need to develop.

The school does not review the teaching of its curriculum and the quality of staff's checks on pupils' learning well enough. Weaknesses in teaching are not addressed quickly enough. For example, some lesson activities need adapting in order to address pupils' misconceptions or their gaps in knowledge. In too many cases, this does not happen. At these times, pupils do not have the knowledge they need to access new learning. As a result, pupils' knowledge does not successfully build over time.

The school prioritises reading. Staff are all well trained to deliver the phonics programme. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. The reading books they take home are matched closely to the sounds that they know. This is helping pupils to become fluent readers by allowing them to practise blending together sounds that they have already been taught. The school promotes reading for pleasure. Pupils enjoy and look forward to daily story times. Extra input is available for some pupils who need additional support to keep up with the phonics programme. This support is effective.

Children in the early years enjoy exploring a well-resourced learning environment. Children are encouraged to develop their independence. However, the school's early years curriculum does not identify the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that children should acquire. Gaps in the school's curricular thinking result in some activities in the early years lacking purpose. Furthermore, staff's spoken interactions do not have a developmental impact on children. In this way, the school does not sustain children's learning of the curriculum content or support the development of children's early language well enough.

Pupils engage well in lessons. Some pupils require additional help to manage their own emotions and behaviours. This support is tailored to pupils' individual needs and is highly effective. It is clear that positive relationships are at the heart of a lot of the school's work. The school communicates proactively with families regarding pupils' attendance. The school provides a range of support including home visits and advice regarding transport. As a result, there has been a significant and positive reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

The school works proactively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils' individual learning needs are identified and met. Mostly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support. However, sometimes the school does not ensure that staff use resources effectively to support these pupils' learning of curriculum content.

Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of different types of families and relationships. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils enjoy accessing a range of clubs. Pupils are wholly accepting of differences between people. As one pupil shared, 'You should never be rude to someone just because they think or believe something different to you.'

The school supports staff effectively with their workload. Staff feel their well-being is carefully considered by leaders. Staff benefit from regular training opportunities. They value the opportunity to work collaboratively across the federation. The governing body works closely with the school and fulfils its statutory duties, such as safeguarding and equalities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the school does not ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding effectively then act on this information to improve teaching. As a result, pupils do not remember what they have been taught in sufficient detail. They do not deepen their understanding over time and some misconceptions remain. Leaders should ensure that

teachers check closely what pupils know, helping them to recall and build on prior learning while resolving any misconceptions.

- The school's early years curriculum is too focused on activities and end goals rather than the knowledge and skills that lead to specific learning over time. As a result, staff do not support children to develop their curriculum knowledge as well as they should. The school should ensure that it identifies the intended knowledge and skills that staff will teach children in each area of learning.
- Not all subject leaders have an accurate evaluation of the curriculum subject they lead. There are inconsistencies in how teachers implement and assess pupils' learning of the curriculum. This limits how well pupils know and remember the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that leaders and teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to deliver and assess the school's curriculum intentions.

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	120422
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10379539
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julie Barmby
Headteacher	Alison Buddle (executive headteacher)
Website	www.shepeaustowschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of The Federation of Gedney Hill CofE Primary and Shepeau Stow Primary School. Both schools are led by an executive headteacher and share a governing body.
- A new chair of governors has been in post since September 2023.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change to the school's senior leadership team with the appointment of a head of school.

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.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, early years and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. The inspector met with members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with the local authority's locality lead.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments, as well as the results of Ofsted's survey for school staff.

Inspection team

Luella Dhoore, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Edmonds	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025