

Jerome Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124175
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359599
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Brothwell
Headteacher	Rachel Hawkins
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by eight teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work including examining the school improvement plan and samples of pupils' work, and analysed responses to 32 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

Pupils' progress in English looking particularly at the development of pupils' writing.

- The use of assessment by teachers including the way assessment information is used to set work that meets pupils' needs and the way that pupils are helped to improve their work.
- The quality of support for potentially vulnerable pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of the new leadership team on raising attainment.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and relatively few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is part-time Nursery provision for children aged three to four. The on-site childcare that occurs before and after school is run by a private company and will be inspected separately. The headteacher joined the school in September 2009 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2010 after spending the two previous terms seconded to the school. There is also new management in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Jerome Primary School is a satisfactory school. The school provides a welcoming environment where pupils are well looked after and, consequently, feel safe and secure. There is a calm and positive environment, reflecting the strong focus on enhancing pupils' personal development and supporting their well-being.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress. Pupils then make satisfactory but somewhat inconsistent progress through the rest of the school and, by the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment is broadly average. The school has made some improvements particularly to attainment in mathematics. The presentation of pupils' writing has improved but overall pupils' writing generally lacks sophistication and the use of punctuation is not always accurate.

Although some good teaching was seen during the inspection, much of the teaching is satisfactory and has resulted in satisfactory outcomes for pupils. Occasionally, there is a lack of precision regarding what pupils are expected to learn in a lesson and the work set is not always matched to pupils' abilities. In the best lessons, teachers regularly check pupils' understanding but this is not consistent. Pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work. In some lessons the pace of learning is rather pedestrian. The school has recently introduced a more creative curriculum but this has not had time to have a full impact and, as a consequence, some lessons still lack excitement. Furthermore, lessons are not always providing the motivating stimulus that is necessary to encourage pupils to produce good quality pieces of extended writing.

Although the new leadership team has very high aspirations for the school, their vitality and vision have not yet infused through the whole school. Outcomes, although satisfactory, are improving. The new system for tracking pupils' progress provides an exceptionally clear picture of the variations in rates of progress in different classes as well as identifying those pupils who are risk of underachieving. The information obtained is combined with that gained from the thorough monitoring of teaching and learning, as a result, the school's leaders have been able to pinpoint exactly where improvements need to be made. This together with improvements to outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of improvement to pupils' writing by
 - ensuring that strategies designed to improve pupils' writing are consistently applied

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- developing pupils' vocabulary, the way they construct sentences and their use of punctuation
- using the creative curriculum more effectively to provide more stimulating contexts for all pupils to produce extended pieces of writing
- Improve the proportion of good teaching by:
 - making certain that the work set in lessons is well matched to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that teachers and pupils are clear about learning intentions in all lessons
 - making sure that pupils' understanding is checked during lessons
 - increasing the pace of learning in lessons
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In the classroom, pupils acquire knowledge and understanding at a satisfactory rate. Although progress is satisfactory overall, there are inconsistencies between the rates of progress made by pupils in different classes both during lessons and over time. In some lessons the pace of learning is slowed because pupils spend too long listening to the teacher instead of practising their skills. Although pupils may grow restless in this situation they continue to behave well reflecting the respect they have for their teachers. The school has introduced many strategies designed to improve the quality of pupils' writing. These have had some success in improving the quality of presentation. However, the pace of improvement has not been quick enough because the strategies have not been robustly applied by all teachers. Consequently pupils use fairly undemanding vocabulary and sentence structures in their writing and their use of punctuation sometimes lacks precision. Attainment in mathematics has improved and at the end of Year 6 in 2010 the entire group of pupils reached the nationally expected standard and some surpassed that standard. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. When teaching is good they make good progress because their needs have been fully addressed but in some lessons their progress slows because their needs have not been given full consideration. Overall their progress is satisfactory.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They feel that bullying is rare and that teachers are quick to sort out any fallings out. Most have a well developed sense of right and wrong and pupils are usually very supportive of each other both in and out of lessons. Their social and moral development is good and opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and understanding of other cultures are starting to improve. A good understanding of the importance of a good diet together with pupils' involvement in a range of physical activities demonstrates their good commitment to developing a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are keen to contribute to the school community however their contribution to and awareness of the wider community is limited. Although pupils develop good social skills and attend school regularly, their progress in basic skills is satisfactory. Therefore, they are satisfactorily equipped for the next stage of their education.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between teachers and pupils are kind and encouraging. They contribute to the effective management of behaviour and promote pupils' good personal development. The organisation of lessons and the use of resources are generally effective. Pupils are sometimes not clear about what level they are working at and say they do not always know how to reach the next level. Moreover, when evaluative comments and instructions for improvement are provided pupils do not always respond appropriately and sometimes continue to make the same mistakes. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to supporting pupils' learning and are often skilled at boosting the confidence of those pupils who find learning challenging. However activities are sometimes not finely matched to pupils' needs and this occasionally slows the progress of more able pupils as well as those who find learning challenging.

The school is aware that although the curriculum is satisfactory, it sometimes lacks excitement and in response the school has just introduced a more creative curriculum. Nevertheless, the implementation of this curriculum is variable and occasionally activities can still be fairly uninspiring. The school has also correctly identified that limited use is made of information technology. There is good range of interesting extra-curricular activities and local partnerships are used successfully to extend the range of opportunities for pupils.

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Pastoral care is good and is particularly effective at encouraging pupils to keep fit and healthy and to develop their self-confidence. Pupils feel listened to and consider that they are well supported. The way that the school identifies and supports potentially vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved and their individual needs are very well known to staff. Good links with external agencies further enhance this good personal support. The school is now looking carefully at the impact of intervention programmes and is not afraid to discontinue programmes when their impact is found to be minimal.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new leadership team have a strong focus on raising standards and are well supported by a governing body that is not afraid to challenge. The school is very clear about where improvements need to be made because monitoring and evaluation have been rigorous. Ambitious plans for improvement have been drawn up but the implementation of the strategies detailed within these plans has been variable. Despite extensive support from the local authority the quality of teaching has remained stubbornly satisfactory rather than improving to good.

The school has effective policies and procedures regarding equal opportunities. These are demonstrated by the way that any form of discrimination is challenged. The progress of different groups of pupils is now carefully tracked. Consequently the school has recognised that there is even more to do to accelerate the progress of different groups of pupils. The school's safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. The school itself forms a cohesive community. However it has only just started to develop its contact with the wider community in the United Kingdom and these new links have not had time to have a full impact on pupils' attitudes and understanding. Therefore the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage have led to improvements to both provision and outcomes for children. When children start in Nursery many of their skills are similar to those that are expected for their age although some are behind in those skills that are related to literacy and calculation. By the time they leave the Reception class most children are working at the expected levels for their age and some are surpassing those levels. Boys are making particularly good progress especially in their writing. There is a great deal of enjoyment and children are making good progress because activities are carefully planned to meet their needs and interests. Many staff are skilled at questioning children and moving their learning on. Assessment procedures are being continually enhanced and are being used well, especially in the Reception class, to support the planning of activities that meet children's needs. Children are well cared for and settle quickly into school routines. Parents are involved in their children's learning and report that their children gain confidence as well as improving their speech and language skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the quality of education provided by the school. Parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly pleased with the support their children receive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Jerome Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	41	16	50	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	44	17	53	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	44	17	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	38	19	59	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	56	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	56	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	44	17	53	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	38	18	56	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	44	17	53	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	63	10	31	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Friday 24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Jerome Primary School, Cannock, WS11 9TP

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. I really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. It was good to know that you enjoy school and feel that you all get on well together. I was impressed by your good behaviour and your good manners. The residential visit to Shrugborough sounded very exciting and you obviously enjoying using the climbing wall that came to your school. It was good to see that you all like to keep fit and healthy.

You go to a satisfactory school. Your attainment is similar to that reached by pupils at other schools. Teaching in your school is satisfactory and helps you to make satisfactory progress but the quality of teaching and your rates of progress can vary from class to class. I have asked the school to make sure that all teachers make it very clear to you what you are expected to learn in each lesson and always check your understanding in lessons. I have also asked them to make certain that you always know exactly what to do to improve your work and that the work you are set is never too hard or too easy. It would help if you could carefully read the comments that teachers write on your work and keep them in mind when you are completing your next piece of work.

We have also asked your teachers to help you improve the quality of your writing by making the words and the sentences you use more interesting and by making certain that your punctuation is more accurate. We know the curriculum is improving but there needs to be even more exciting opportunities for writing. The senior leaders and the staff are determined to make your school even better. You can assist them by continuing to work hard in lessons.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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