



Ash Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124028
LEA Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 281608
Inspection dates 14 March 2006 to 15 March 2006
Reporting inspector Barbara Crane AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Lea
School category	Community		Trentham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 658977
Number on roll	485	Fax number	01782 642316
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr G Leary
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr N Addison

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Introduction

Three Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

Ash Green Primary School is a larger-than-average school on the edge of Stoke-on-Trent. The social and economic features of the school's area are broadly average. Children's attainment when they start at the school is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with expectations. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school has extended provision in the form of a before- and after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ash Green provides a good quality education and inspectors agree with the school's view of its good effectiveness. It gives good value for money. The school is a happy and vibrant place where pupils are keen to learn and take advantage of what is offered. Parents are right to feel that the school does well for their children.

Teaching and learning are good and standards are above average by the time pupils leave, and exceptionally high in science. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to reach above-average standards by the end of reception. This good overall achievement continues over the rest of pupils' time at school, and there is often very good progress in Years 3 to 6 because teaching here weaves together pupils' learning in an exciting way. In particular, pupils use their skills in writing very well across the curriculum. While Year 1 and 2 pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics, their progress in writing is not as fast because teaching does not adapt the work as well for pupils of different abilities. Additionally, these pupils do not sufficiently use their writing skills in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good and their level of confidence and enjoyment of school is greatly enhanced by excellent opportunities to perform in music, dance and sport. Pupils are particularly proud of their achievement in these areas.

Good leadership and management have led to good improvement since the previous inspection. There is good capacity for further improvement because the school knows what it needs to work on next.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 make better progress in writing and use their writing skills across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are above average by the time they leave the school and the Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets. Standards in science are exceptionally high in Year 6, reflecting very high expectations in teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, often reaching the expectations for their age because of good support. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language do well because they get the teaching they need. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, from an average starting point, and reach standards that are above average by the end of Reception. They make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of high expectations. Year 2 pupils achieve well, overall, and standards are above average in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are average and while achievement is satisfactory, Year 1 and 2 pupils should be doing better. Progress in writing is slower in these years because the work does not sufficiently take their different abilities into

account. The school identified what it needed to do to raise the achievement of more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 in science, mathematics and writing and has been successful in doing so. As a result, almost half of the pupils are likely to gain the level above that expected for their age in English and mathematics and just over three quarters of pupils in science. Pupils' work in music and dance reaches a high standard because of expert teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their social, spiritual, moral and cultural development, is good and children make a quick start in developing good attitudes to work in the Foundation Stage. Pupils' confidence flourishes and many have a very mature attitude. They get along with each other very well and enjoy learning, whether in lessons or performing in the choirs and dance groups. These events do much for the self-esteem of many pupils. 'I love dancing,' said one pupil, 'it's the thing I do best in school.'

Attendance is good and pupils are keen to get down to work and to meet their friends at the start of the school day. They behave well and show a good sense of responsibility for themselves and others. They practise what they have learned to keep safe and healthy and comment on how the school's wide range of sporting activities helps them to keep fit. Pupils say that there is hardly ever any bullying, and if there are problems, teachers sort them out promptly. Pupils are quick to take the initiative in helping each other and their teachers. They help the community, for example, by recycling. They organise fund-raising for charities such as hospices near home and troubled areas overseas. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and their suggestions about the playground equipment have been used to improve facilities. They feel, however, that they have not been as effective recently, as elections for new members are overdue. Pupils learn good skills in working as teams, as well as in literacy, numeracy and working with computers, to help them later in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and so pupils achieve well. Children's good attitudes to learning are very well promoted in the Foundation Stage. Teaching throughout the school is enthusiastic and so pupils enjoy school and show real interest and concentration in lessons. Relationships are excellent and teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Hence pupils behave well and there is a harmonious, working atmosphere across the school. Well-trained teaching assistants give very effective support to groups and individuals, including those with additional learning needs. Pupils use computers and other technology well to support their learning because of good direct teaching of skills.

The best teaching is in Years 3 to 6. This is because of more consistency in the use of assessments to challenge pupils of different abilities, particularly in writing, and teachers plan a joined-up approach to learning, enabling pupils to make connections from one subject to another. This reinforces pupils' understanding and enables them to practise skills meaningfully, as in the links made to other subjects in science that promote high standards. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' confidence is stronger when teaching reading than writing. In these two years, assessments of pupils' progress in writing are not used to provide work at exactly the right level. Hence, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in writing. There are many examples of inspired teaching of music and dance throughout the school, resulting in pupils' great enjoyment in these areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, with some outstanding features. Many pupils take part in the sports activities and other exciting, interesting things to do outside normal lessons. The school makes outstanding efforts to support pupils' creativity. All pupils enjoy weekly dance lessons and many perform to a very high standard in local and national theatres. The curriculum captures pupils' imagination, for example, Year 6 pupils have tested their designs to protect model vehicles in crashes. The science curriculum is very practically based and challenges more able pupils very well. From the Foundation Stage upwards, children's work in all subjects is celebrated in displays that ensure a very attractive, stimulating environment. Older pupils have very good opportunities to practise writing skills across subjects but in Years 1 and 2, the overuse of worksheets means that pupils have limited opportunities to use what they have learned in writing and this restricts their progress. The programme of personal, social and health education places a good emphasis on the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit, as well as developing skills of working together to resolve daily problems in life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's good arrangements for care, guidance and support include secure procedures for safeguarding children. Procedures for child protection are good. The staff create a warm and supportive atmosphere right from the earliest days in Foundation Stage. Pupils comment that they are well looked after. They know where to go to get advice if they need it and feel confident that adults will help them. Generally, guidance for pupils to improve their work is well based on pupils' previous progress, and older pupils know their targets and how to reach them. The targets for developing pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 are less well drawn from assessments and are not sufficiently useful for teachers to adapt their planning. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported by capable teaching assistants, and by teachers who carefully plan their lessons, often with clear individual targets. Through healthy eating projects and physical education activities, pupils are encouraged to

gain a good awareness of how to lead a healthy life. Many enjoy attending the before- and after-school club.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a clear direction by supporting pupils' achievement in their work and promoting their development as well-rounded, confident individuals. A strong sense of community results from good teamwork by the staff, governors and parents. Governors provide good support for the school and are well informed through links with particular year groups.

The school's self-evaluation is good and there is good capacity to improve. Good analysis of data and some effective checking on what is happening in classrooms lead to the school identifying where improvements are needed. The effectiveness with which the school works towards its targets is seen in the way that it has improved in monitoring its work since the previous inspection, as well as boosting more able pupils' performance in Years 3 to 6. The school's current priority of ensuring the consistent progress of pupils in writing in Years 1 and 2 needs more work to check that teaching is supporting improvements.

The school seeks the views of parents and other agencies and takes these into account. The parents' view that the times of the after-school club should be extended, for example, has been built into the school's planning for the future.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	NA
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking and listening to you and looking at your work. We found that your school is a happy and friendly place. You are right to feel proud of your school and your achievements in music and dance. These are the things that we found are best about your school:

- You do well in your work.
- You like your teachers, enjoy being with friends and take part in lots of exciting activities.
- You are confident, well-behaved young people who get on very well together and enjoy helping others around school.
- You are well looked after and get extra help with your work if you need it.
- The grown-ups know what they need to do to make the school even better.

We have asked the people in charge to make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 do your very best in writing. Thank you again for helping us with our work and good luck in the future.