



St Edward's CofE (C) First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124241
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292930
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector David Cox

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

Type of school	First	School address	Hollow Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Cheddleton
Age range of pupils	3–9		Leek ST13 7HP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01538 360435
Number on roll (school)	214	Fax number	01538 361709
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Martin Leigh
		Headteacher	Tracy Jackson-Ward
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–9	11–12 October 2006	292930

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Edward's Church of England First School is an average-sized first school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. When children start school in the Nursery, many have the skills and knowledge expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education. Pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards overall because the teaching and the curriculum are good. Parents and pupils are very happy with the school. They comment on the very caring nature of the school and how approachable the headteacher and her staff are. They appreciate the good care, guidance and support that underpins pupils' good personal development and well-being.

Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception because good teaching enables good progress in all aspects of their learning. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is slightly above average. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Hence, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall. Pupils do particularly well in reading and mathematics, where standards are exceptionally high. Standards in writing are above average.

Standards remain above average by the end of Year 4 but progress is not as good as in Years 1 and 2. Teachers do not always use the information gathered on pupils' previous performance to plan activities that challenge pupils enough.

Standards in writing across the school are not quite as high as those in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not always make effective use of the strategies introduced to improve writing skills.

Pupils feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy their time at school. Attendance levels are above average. Pupils behave well because adults in the school are good role models and encourage pupils to be courteous and polite. Older pupils take great pride in helping younger pupils to settle into school routines. They appreciate the considerable improvements made to the school environment in recent years. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions through the school council and questionnaires. They say there is very little they would change about the school, apart from improving the toilet facilities. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles because of the effective programmes of regular exercise and a good range of out-of-school sporting activities. Their concern for others is demonstrated by the many fundraising events they organise and their positive contribution to the local and wider community. Pupils develop good basic skills which prepare them well for later life.

This is a well-led and managed school. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Her clear strategic thinking, confident approach to managed risks and innovative practice show that the school is well placed to move forward. Effective staff training is improving teaching and making the curriculum more relevant for pupils. School self-evaluation is generally accurate, although it undervalues itself with respect to pupils' achievement. Subject leaders currently have a limited role in checking the work in their curriculum areas. As a result they are not ensuring that new systems and strategies are applied consistently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of writing by ensuring that teachers make use of the recently introduced strategies for improvement.
- Raise standards in Years 3 and 4 by making more effective use of assessment data to set more challenging work.
- Extend the role of the subject leaders in checking and evaluating the work in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and reflect the pupils' good progress. During their time in the Nursery and Reception, children make good progress, with nearly all achieving what is expected nationally by the end of Reception. Good planning, effective assessment and exciting activities ensure that children's needs are addressed carefully and they make good progress in all areas of learning.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall. In 2005, standards in reading and mathematics were exceptionally high. Standards in writing were above average. The 2006 provisional results indicate that standards in reading and mathematics have been maintained at a high level. Standards in writing have improved as a consequence of support programmes for staff and pupils on the building of 'letter sounds'. The school has correctly identified that standards of writing need to be improved even further. The school is taking action to make the required improvements, although it is too early to measure the full impact.

By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards are above average overall and their achievement during Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is above average. One parent commented, 'My child runs into school and never looks back!' Pupils like their teachers, saying they provide interesting lessons. They feel valued and secure. Most behave well, listening attentively and working hard in lessons.

Pupils develop good social skills because they have good opportunities to mix in a variety of social settings, such as the Year 4 residential visit. Pupils in Year 4 give younger children valued support and friendship. Pupils know what is fair and right. They develop empathy for others, supporting an impressive range of charities. Pupils are confident and enjoy the carefully designed rewards they receive for good deeds. Daily acts of collective worship make satisfactory contributions to the pupils' developing

spiritual awareness. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is good, but they have limited knowledge and understanding about living in a multi-ethnic society.

All pupils contribute to the work of the school council and the school acts proactively on their suggestions. Pupils take an active part in school happenings, such as providing biscuits for a recent coffee morning. Pupils' basic skills are well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Nursery and Reception, teachers and support staff work closely together to provide interesting activities that help children develop good skills of independence. Pupils listen attentively, show interest and thoroughly enjoy their time both in and out of the classroom. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good. Teachers' high expectations are reflected in the challenging work set for pupils, to which they respond positively. A strong feature is the way teachers are enabling pupils to consider how they learn and not just what they learn.

Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is managed skilfully by staff and this ensures that pupils concentrate hard, gain in confidence and participate fully in activities. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because there is an effective contribution from teaching assistants, who support and manage these pupils well.

Teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 are satisfactory. Assessment data is not always used effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Much has been done to create an attractive, stimulating school environment that values the pupils' work. Children in the Nursery and Reception settle quickly and enjoy a wide range of interesting, appropriate activities. In Years 1 to 4, there is good provision for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although initiatives to address weaknesses in pupils' writing are inconsistent. The new headteacher has given importance to delivering a relevant curriculum. Hence opportunities are developing to apply skills across subjects, for example, in a Year 3 history lesson, using skills taught in literacy.

Pupils know how to stay safe. They enjoy whole-school focus weeks such as Road Safety, where interesting visitors add excitement. Life skills are taught through carefully planned personal and social education, helping children to learn how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils talk about the good range of beneficial after-school clubs and are enthusiastic about the interesting range of visits and visitors that bring learning alive.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has a strong caring ethos, much appreciated by parents. They are very positive about the school's provision and approachability and are grateful for the nurture and support their children receive. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place. Pupils feel safe and able to share problems, saying any bullying is quickly resolved.

Children in the Nursery and Reception make a good start as a result of effective organisation and clear boundaries for behaviour. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and achieve in line with their peers because their carefully written individual education plans help them to learn in small, appropriate steps. Good intervention strategies support those requiring a boost to their learning. The headteacher is quick to respond when pupils require additional support, often contacting other professionals, who respond by bringing special expertise. Pupils' personal targets have been introduced to help them improve their work over time. However, these are inconsistently used by teachers, which limit pupils' progress, especially in Years 3 and 4.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school, including governance, are good. The headteacher leads the school very well and she is effectively supported by governors. She has clear aspirations for the school and is keen to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can. There are clear and agreed strategies for improvement which focus primarily on raising pupils' performance through improved teaching.

The headteacher is very good at evaluating and acting on the outcomes of the rigorous checks that are carried out. Her approach has been central in bringing about improvement in many aspects of the school's provision. School self-evaluation is mostly accurate and decisive action is taken to improve areas of weakness. Leaders have shown that they can move the school forward and also maintain its strengths. The school is exploring how those with subject management responsibilities can become more accountable. They currently have a limited role in checking and supporting the development of teaching in their areas of responsibility. As a consequence, some of the new initiatives that have been introduced are not embedded fully across the school.

The school has developed good partnerships with outside agencies to support its work. Parents are very happy with the quality of the school's provision.

Governors are very supportive and are well informed. They have a good working relationship with the school and actively seek information about its performance. They fulfil their statutory duties well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we visited your school recently to find out how well St Edward's is doing. We would like to thank you for looking after us so well. We enjoyed talking to so many of you during play time and lunch time about your school, the work you have done and how much you enjoy coming to school. We think that the school is providing you with a good education.

What we found

During your time in school, you make good progress because your teachers help you to work hard and give you lots of exciting things to do. You like coming to school and say what a wonderful place it is. Your parents also value the good care that you receive and they like the many changes that have taken place recently to improve your school. You enjoy all the extra sports, clubs and visits that you take part in. The adults in your school look after you well and some of you who sometimes have difficulty learning are given lots of support. The people in charge of your school work hard and have lots of ideas about how to make it even better.

We have asked the school to make sure that lessons are as good as they can be and that you improve your writing. We have also asked the teachers of older children to keep a closer eye on how well you are doing so that you can be given more challenging work.

Thank you once again for your help.