

New Ford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124023
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	314782
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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 on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Abbotts
Headteacher	Kate Quick
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2003
School address	Brownley Road Smallthorne Stoke-on-Trent ST6 1PY
Telephone number	01782 234605
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

New Ford Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized school set in an area where there are pockets of social and economic disadvantage on the outskirts of the city. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average, as is the percentage who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. More pupils than usual leave or join the school at times other than the normal starting or finishing stages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils are hugely positive about the school, which is not surprising as this is a good school. It has some outstanding features and there are so many aspects of the school about which parents are enthusiastic, saying such things as, 'This is a school where learning is linked to fun!' and, 'The headteacher is passionate about her job and her charisma enthuses both her staff and the children in her care.' At the heart of the school's success is the determination of the headteacher to provide the very best for her pupils. This drive has been communicated extremely well and is shared by all staff and governors. One of the key results is the good quality of teaching, which is ensuring that pupils achieve well. Children start in the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. Provision in Nursery and Reception is good and these children make good progress. This good progress is maintained through the school and by the time they leave in Year 6, pupils have reached average standards. The pastoral care provided by all adults is excellent and is resulting in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. This is recognised by parents, who typically say, 'The headteacher and teachers are very approachable and happy to help with problems and concerns; most importantly they care.' Pupils behave extremely well and are polite and caring. They thoroughly enjoy their school life, which was summed up well by a parent, who said, 'When they are on holiday, they are always asking how many days until we go back to school.' One of the major reasons for pupils' enjoyment of school is the wide range of interesting activities organised for them both in lessons and at other times. They are enthused by the opportunities they have to learn through drama, for example. Teachers know the needs of their pupils very well and this means that they adapt learning very well to meet these needs. A particular feature is the independence that is encouraged from an early stage. For example, in many lessons pupils are expected to choose their own method of recording. Although pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning in some subjects, the lack of equipment readily available in their classrooms means that opportunities are missed. There are very good systems for assessing what pupils know and can do, but these are in their relatively early stages. Good information is gathered on pupils' progress and this is analysed well so that potential underachievement can be nipped in the bud. Data are collected for different groups. For example, the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is monitored closely and this shows that they make at least as good progress as their classmates. Although targets are set for pupils to improve their work, these targets are not sufficiently specific and pupils are often unclear about what they need to learn next. This also makes it difficult for teachers to give pupils clear guidance when they are marking their work. There is a very clear sense of teamwork, stemming from leaders and managers, and a corporate desire to take the school forward. Bearing this in mind, along with the good progress the school has made in recent years, the school is well placed to continue on its upward path. Its success could hardly be better encapsulated than in this comment from a parent: 'The school prepares happy, confident, enthusiastic, motivated children, well prepared for their transition to high school.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge so activities are organised to ensure children progress well. The Foundation Stage manager has a very strong understanding of the needs of these young children and leads her team well. The team plans together to create a curriculum which

is rich, supportive and highly appropriate to the children's needs. These differing needs are actively planned for so that each child is provided with tasks that suit them. There is an appropriate balance between activities that adults lead and ones that children choose for themselves. Children show a high level of self-confidence during lessons. Teaching assistants support the teachers well and make a valuable contribution to children's learning. Assessment is used very effectively to make judgments about children's progress as well as informing the next steps that the pupils need to take. Children are engaged at all times and the Foundation Stage is a calm, industrious and caring environment. Limitations in the outside environment restrict its use as a learning area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are set targets so that they know exactly what they need to learn next and that teachers then mark to these targets.
- In Years 1 to 6, provide more opportunities for independent use of ICT in lessons within the classroom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in the national assessments in Year 2 and Year 6 showed an upward trend for a number of years, until an expected drop in 2007. There were good reasons for this drop, the major ones being the high proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and new pupils in these two cohorts. Standards are currently showing an improvement again and are broadly average at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as their classmates as their needs are identified early and they are supported well. More- able pupils also make good progress because, as a parent said, 'Teachers set extended learning tasks regularly.' Standards in art and physical education (PE) are higher than those usually found.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are founded in the school's ethos. A warm and purposeful atmosphere pervades. In lessons, pupils collaborate very well indeed, as illustrated when Years 3 and 4 pupils created flowcharts to explain how their inventions work. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and when at play is excellent. There is very little bullying and pupils are adamant that it is dealt with effectively and they feel very safe in school. Pupils are almost unanimous in their feelings that this is a good school and that they really enjoy attending. They say that it is friendly, the work is interesting and they feel that it belongs to them; the School Council provided a lengthy list of all the changes that have been made as a result of their ideas. Pupils enjoy the healthy lunches, and particularly the healthy tuck shop, and speak highly of all the opportunities provided for physical activity. Pupils know about the dangers of drugs and also that, whilst some are beneficial, they can prove otherwise if taken unwisely. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are determined to do their best. Pupils of all ages show a very mature attitude and their awareness of the needs of others leads them to support disadvantaged people both in this country and overseas. Physically disabled pupils feel valued by their peers, who support them well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good, with examples of outstanding practice. High quality planning ensures that the needs of all pupils are catered for within lessons. This planning is recent, and is not totally consistent, as it is based on the new systems of assessment. It has therefore not yet had opportunity to have a full effect on pupils' progress. All pupils, from Nursery upwards, show a very high level of independence. Older children were seen working in small groups to develop a 'fair test' without any intervention needed from their teacher. This demanded good speaking and listening skills as well as the ability to think independently and to construct clear lines of enquiry. Younger children moved between activities and settled at new activities without disruption to other children. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and higher-achieving pupils. 'Talk Partners' are used effectively to develop speaking and listening skills and this also contributes to the pace and interactive nature of lessons. ICT, when taught within the well-equipped suite, is delivered appropriately. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT independently, particularly in the classroom, and this limits learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Extremely detailed planning ensures that pupils' learning at all ability levels is supported and extended exceptionally well. There are particular areas of strength. Specifically, the artwork that proudly adorns the school throughout the shared spaces is of a high standard and reflects the outstanding art curriculum. These displays celebrate pupils' artistic achievements and significantly improve the learning environment. Provision for PE is also outstanding and pupils involved in creating contemporary dances from a traditional stimulus demonstrated a high level of skill. There is a very strong programme of enrichment, including French and extracurricular activities. The outside environment is extensive, although further opportunities to enhance the curriculum are missed as some of these areas are underdeveloped.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral support is exemplary. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because all adults care about them. 'Problems are sorted out quickly – they listen to both sides and help us make friends again. They also help us if we have any problems out of school.' Parents' comments reinforce these views and the school makes every effort to involve them in their children's activities. Dads are encouraged to come into school and share in reading activities with their sons and parents are invited to join in with charity activities, such as the aerobic marathon. Guidance is given to pupils to help their progress and they find teachers' marking of their work helpful in telling them how to improve. Most are aware that they have targets but these are insufficiently specific and individual so are often forgotten. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous and regularly updated.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has created a strong management structure. She, and very able deputy and assistant headteachers, make a very effective senior leadership team which is responsible for strategic development. The four teaching team leaders form a middle management group, who put the detail into development plans. The success of this structure gives the school extremely clear direction and is largely responsible for the progress being made. However, the structure is relatively new and has not yet had a full impact on raising pupils' achievement. A key aspect of this devolved leadership is the effectiveness of self-evaluation. A very accurate picture has been created of the school's strengths and areas for development, and the latter are being addressed well. For example, the effectiveness of the strategies put in place to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills is readily seen. Monitoring is rigorous and has played an important role in developing this picture. Governors are involved well in the monitoring programme and provide good levels of support and challenge for the school. A particularly good example of the strong links that have been forged with parents is the weekly newsletter. Parents are encouraged, and often take the opportunity, to respond to or comment on its content. Many parents commented on the value of this two-way-communication, saying such things as, 'Levels of communication emphasise the staff's commitment to the children.'

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

- 13 March 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of New Ford Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 1PY Thank you so much for your welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed listening to you tell us how much you enjoy your school and how proud you are of it. You are right to be proud as it is a good school. Some things are outstanding. For example, you behave extremely well and are developing well into extremely polite and very sensible young people. We were really impressed with the way you help around school and do things for other people, such as raising money for charities and organising a party for your grandparents at Christmas. Much of the reason for your outstanding personal development is that all adults care for you really well. You told us that they are always there to listen to you and help you, so that you feel very safe. Another outstanding feature is the exciting and interesting range of activities planned for you in lessons as well as the clubs, visits and visitors. This helps you to make good progress. Of course, the main reason you make good progress is because you are being taught well. We were impressed with the way your teachers made lessons interesting and fun and helped you to learn. I am sure you realise that the success of your school is down to the hard work of all the staff and particularly your headteacher. The school is very well run and your headteacher and staff are constantly looking for ways that they can make it even better. There are a couple of things we have suggested to your headteacher and staff that they concentrate on to help make the school even better.
- Although you have targets to help you to improve your work, they are not clear enough and your teachers sometimes find it difficult to mention them when they are marking your work.
- You are taught ICT skills well but do not have enough opportunities to use these skills and the computers in other subjects. I am sure you will continue to work hard and make sure you know your targets so that you can do even better. Well done and best wishes! John D Eadie Lead inspector

13 March 2008



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Inspection of New Ford Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 1PY

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Another outstanding feature is the exciting and interesting range of activities planned for you in lessons as well as the clubs, visits and visitors. This helps you to make good progress. Of course, the main reason you make good progress is because you are being taught well. We were impressed with the way your teachers made lessons interesting and fun and helped you to learn. I am sure you realise that the success of your school is down to the hard work of all the staff and particularly your headteacher. The school is very well run and your headteacher and staff are constantly looking for ways that they can make it even better.

There are a couple of things we have suggested to your headteacher and staff that they concentrate on to help make the school even better.

- Although you have targets to help you to improve your work, they are not clear enough and your teachers sometimes find it difficult to mention them when they are marking your work.
- You are taught ICT skills well but do not have enough opportunities to use these skills and the computers in other subjects.

I am sure you will continue to work hard and make sure you know your targets so that you can do even better.

Well done and best wishes!

John D Eadie
Lead inspector