

# Jerome Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124175
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314832
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rashida Sharif HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Brothwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeff Eaton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Hussey Road Norton Canes Cannock WS11 9TP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 278595
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 278595

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Jerome Primary is an average-size school. It has a part-time nursery provision and wrap-around day-care provision for 25 children. The school is situated in a former mining village, which is now a dormitory suburb. Approximately 40% of the school population live outside the catchment area. The overwhelming majority of the pupils are of White British background. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils start school with standards that are below the national average. Achievement at the end of the Foundation Stage remains below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this trend is not maintained as pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2. The school successfully raised standards and achievement in 2007 through targeted support for those in Years 2 and 6. These initiatives have not been as rigorously applied across the school in order to ensure further improvements in standards. The school is aware that they have not used assessment information effectively and consistently enough, to set accurate targets for individual pupils to reach. Daily lesson plans have not been sharply enough focused on the progress expected from learners.

The most successful aspect of the school is the care and support given to pupils. This helps them to feel safe, have confidence in themselves and have a positive attitude to school. Work with pupils who have behavioural and emotional difficulties is good. Consequently, some of these pupils make good progress towards their targets. The staff work well as a team and give high prominence to pupils' personal and social development. This helps pupils behave well, become confident learners and understand how to eat a healthy diet and keep fit. There is demand from pupils and their parents for a greater variety of extra-curricular activities. In their response to the Ofsted questionnaire, parents indicated they would like the school to communicate and work more closely with them, and school leaders recognise that this is an aspect of the school that could be improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the hard work and dedication of the staff responsible for special needs.

Pupils appreciate opportunities to engage in the arts but have less opportunity to develop their awareness of our multicultural society. They have good opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, and contribute to the community well through the impressive ways in which they raise money for various charities. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes have improved significantly and are now good. Attendance is improved considerably and is now above the national average because of the many well-planned initiatives introduced by the school, but authorised absence remains an issue owing to a minority of pupils being taken on holiday by their parents during the school term.

The curriculum places an appropriately strong focus on literacy and numeracy to help to raise standards further. Pupils are grouped by ability and mixed-age pupils are taught together to ensure that pupils of different abilities are given work which challenges them appropriately. The introduction of the assessment and tracking systems is being further developed to ensure that data are used consistently by all staff. However, some of these developments have not had sufficient time to be embedded in the everyday practice of the school. The opportunity to go on visits makes the curriculum relevant and interesting.

The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision of where he wants the school to be. He is admirably supported by new appointments to the leadership team, who share his vision. The turn over of staff has been and continues to be a challenge for the school. This has impacted on the development work of the leadership and management team. Leaders and managers at all levels have not been able to

contribute effectively to set the clear direction leading to improvements. However, the school is now in a better position to involve all teachers in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work on pupils' overall achievement. The school is beginning to have a clearer view of its strengths and is tackling some of the areas of weakness methodically. Checks on teaching and learning are now becoming regular and rigorous, and training is given where necessary. Teaching has improved, according to the school's own evidence, and is now satisfactory. The school recognises, however, that there is still some work to be done to spread some of the good practice that exists in the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money and the leadership and management provide the school with satisfactory capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children attend the Nursery, which prepares them well for the Reception class. The Nursery is well managed and provides a good start to the children's education. Although standards are below those expected in communication and language, they are broadly average in mathematical development. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of individual children. The environment is stimulating, with specific areas arranged to promote learning through play. The children have a range of learning opportunities throughout the day, including focused, teacher-led activities and opportunities to learn independently through exploration.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that there is more consistently good teaching by rigorously applying across the school the initiatives used to raise standards and achievement in 2007.
- Use assessment information more effectively to set accurate targets for individual pupils to reach, through focusing more sharply on outcomes for learners in daily lesson planning.
- Work to improve communications with parents and carers so that they feel fully involved in their child's education at all levels.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due, in part, to the numerous initiatives that have been put in place in the last 12 months which have helped reverse the lower rate of progress made in Year 1, which was due to staffing difficulties. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national averages but not enough pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel like valued members of the community through their roles as members of the school council and playground buddies. They welcome their developing role as mentors to enable them to help other pupils. One of them said, 'The teachers always

listen to us here and help us when we need help.' Pupils develop their social and cooperative skills well through working together at recreational times and also through working in groups in classes. Moral development is good and the pupils have a clear idea of what is fair. Pupils feel safe and know who to turn to if they have any worries. They are confident that bullying is not tolerated and any instances are dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles and participate in a variety of physical activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good relationships ensure pupils are attentive and enjoy lessons. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the progress pupils make. Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides a good blend of direct instruction and activities that enable pupils to explore and work independently. In the most effective lessons, teachers make sure that all pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers are beginning to use the assessment information to match tasks to pupils' individual needs. However, this is not consistent across the school. Pupils are generally well behaved and highly motivated and show good levels of concentration in most lessons. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to stimulate teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure those pupils who need extra help are given it, particularly those who are in Years 2 and 6. As a result, the quality of these pupils' work has improved markedly.

Although there are examples of good teaching, there are some weaknesses. For example, although assessment is used to plan lessons, the activities do not always match individual needs. The school recognises that it needs to develop the expertise of teachers to ensure that the recently established tracking system is used more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. Similarly, further work is needed to empower the pupils to take responsibility for their own self-assessment and learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The stimulating environment in the Foundation Stage provides the youngest children with an appropriate curriculum for their age. A satisfactory range of after-school clubs is available for pupils to join and these are well attended. A sound range of visits and visitors enhances the basic curriculum. The school has good links with local high schools. A teacher from one of the local schools comes to the school to teach music and French to Year 5 for one afternoon a week. Pupils visit an outdoor education centre for a week to develop independent learning skills. They have opportunities to contribute to and take on responsibilities within the school and the local community and are developing their awareness of economic issues through, for example, running their own tuck shop. The school is currently working towards Healthy School status and so is promoting increased physical activity and healthy eating through healthy tuck at breaktimes.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

All statutory policies in relation to child protection and the safeguarding of pupils are fully in place. The school makes good use of resources provided by outside agencies to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met. The quality of academic support is inconsistent. Although

there are examples of good marking and feedback in lessons, not all pupils have enough guidance to tell them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils talk knowledgeably about their own targets for writing and mathematics, but targets for other subjects are not consistently in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Some new appointments to the leadership team have brought an injection of new energy and a sense of urgency to deal with some of the longstanding issues. For example, the more robust assessment and tracking systems are being further developed to ensure that data are better used by all staff. However, some of these developments have not had sufficient time to be embedded in the everyday practice of the school. The local authority, through its intensive support programme, is beginning to have some impact. This is evident in the 2007 results, which are the best the school has seen in the last three years. Staff have responded well to the opportunities offered for professional development, which is beginning to improve their planning and assessment. Leadership and management of special educational need have also developed in the last twelve months to ensure that the needs of all the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and met. The vast majority of these pupils now make good progress. Governors work appropriately with the school and provide a sense of balance and encouragement for the leadership team. They are becoming more involved in whole-school initiatives to raise standards by posing some searching questions and holding the school to account.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has effective methods to check on the quality of teaching and learning, although the monitoring is not always evaluative enough to identify and spread the best practice that is evident in the school. The leadership team knows what they wish to achieve, but targets are not specific enough. This hampers evaluation.

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## Annex A

## 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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

8 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Jerome Primary School, Hussey Road, Staffordshire WS11 9TP

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. In particular, I would like to thank the school council for giving their dinner time to talk to me. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work in lessons. You told us you enjoy school and we could see why. You make a good contribution to the life of the school through your work in the school council and also through your work as 'playground buddies'.

Here are some of the things we liked most of all:

- Your positive attitude to learning.
- You enjoy learning and you come to school every day on time.
- The way you get on together and listen to each other when you are working in groups and when you are sharing ideas with the whole class.
- You behave well and are polite and well mannered.
- Adults in your school take good care of you and give you extra help if you need it.
- Teachers work hard to make learning interesting.
- You know how well you are doing and some of you know what you need to do to further improve your work.

There are three things we have asked your school to work on to help you improve your work even more:

- Make sure that the work the school has been doing to improve your standards is carried on by everyone, so as to make more of the teaching as good as the best.
- Use the information they have about how well you are doing to plan work in lessons that is right for everyone.
- Keep your parents better informed and involve them more.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Rashida Sharif Her Majesty's Inspector

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