

Tittensor CofE (C) First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124279
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314872
Inspection date	27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Hampson
Teacher in charge	Sue O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Beechcliffe Lane Tittensor Stoke-on-Trent ST12 9HP
Telephone number	01782 372539
Fax number	01782 372539

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Attainment on entry to the school varies but is slightly above average overall. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The previous headteacher left in April 2007. An acting headteacher has been supporting the school for one day per week this term but was absent during the inspection. A full-time headteacher has been appointed for September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where members of staff work well with the parents to help pupils achieve well. Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception class, where they learn quickly and become confident. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are working comfortably within the levels expected for this age group and several are working beyond them. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 4 because good teaching and learning ensure that pupils of differing ability build successfully on what they already know and can do. As a result, by the end of Year 4, pupils' standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics. However, progress for pupils in mathematics is only satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. This is because they are not consistently expected to work at the levels of which they are capable, especially when carrying out investigations or solving problems.

Good relationships and the friendly family atmosphere help pupils to enjoy school thoroughly. Their personal development and well-being are good because they learn to work together well and behave sensibly. They are enthusiastic about taking part in most activities, although they do not always take enough care over their writing and this is sometimes untidy. A good curriculum ensures that pupils learn a broad range of skills. The curriculum is adapted successfully to meet the needs of all learners equally well and includes good use of visits and visitors to make learning interesting and meaningful.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior teacher has ensured the smooth day-to-day running of the school in the absence of the acting headteacher and pupils continue to do well. Senior leaders and governors work together well and are keen to make the school even better. However, they do not have a clear enough picture of how successful the school is because information collected is not analysed in sufficient detail. This makes it difficult for members of staff to respond to any minor dips in progress as soon as they arise.

Most parents are very pleased with the work of the school. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'The school fosters a very caring environment where each child is valued and made to feel special'. Sensitive intervention from all members of staff ensures that care, guidance and support are good. The school's aim, 'Caring for one another as we grow and learn together' is met well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4.
- Ensure that pupils always take care in the way they present their work.
- Improve the rigour in the way senior leaders and governors evaluate the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress and are working at or beyond the levels expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. They are confident, demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary, know the sounds different letters make and how to write some words.

In Years 1 to 4, pupils make good progress and build well on what they have already learnt. This is because they are set and achieve suitably challenging targets. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. In writing, progress is

satisfactory but pupils do not always take enough care and produce their best work. By the end of Year 4, standards are well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make good progress in reading and writing, although, as in Years 1 and 2, they do not always produce tidy work. Standards are not as high in mathematics as they are in English because pupils do not develop their skills in carrying out mathematical problems or investigations quickly.

Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well by teachers, enabling them to make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The well-developed personal and social skills of pupils are an important factor in their good achievement. Pupils support each other well and behave sensibly in lessons and around school. Although rates of attendance are broadly average, pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school. They have good attitudes to their work and try hard in most lessons, although they do not always take enough care with the presentation of their work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development, although satisfactory, is less strong as there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to learn about life in multicultural Britain. From starting school in the Nursery and Reception class, children quickly learn to care for and to respect others. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility well and they know that their views are taken into account through the effective school council. They show good concern for those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for charity. Pupils contribute positively to the community. For example, during the inspection they were preparing their wonderful gardens for judging in the 'Stone in Bloom' competition. These activities, as well as pupils' good basic skills, prepare them well for future life.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of adopting safe and healthy lifestyles. They grow their own food in the school garden and this helps them to appreciate the importance of a balanced diet. Pupils enjoy taking exercise and working, as they say, 'in the fresh air' in the school's delightful nature areas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, positive and supportive relationships are a key feature in motivating and engaging pupils. Lessons are well organised and interactive whiteboards are used successfully to illustrate and enliven lessons. Teachers plan work carefully. They make good use of the flexibility of mixed-age classes by arranging for less able or more able pupils to change classes for some lessons. This means that work can be closely matched to their need and is generally challenging for all pupils, including the more able or those with learning difficulties. However, mathematics work in Years 3 and 4 does not always build well enough on what pupils already know and this slows progress. In addition, teachers throughout the school do not always do enough to ensure that pupils produce consistently tidy work.

In the Nursery and Reception class, the teacher and nursery nurse work together successfully to make learning exciting. Expectations of what children should achieve are high, resulting in

there being a good pace to learning, especially in personal, social and emotional development and writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and is sharply focused on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. This has a good effect on standards. The school has begun to link different subjects more closely than in the past. This is helping to make learning more meaningful for pupils, although there are still some missed opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. In the Nursery and Reception class, there is a good balance of activities that foster independence well and help children to learn new skills quickly. Visits and visitors make a good contribution to learning and help to bring subjects alive. Pupils are encouraged successfully to learn about healthy lifestyles by taking part in different sports and by growing their own food.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are right to be confident that their children are well cared for. Members of staff know all the pupils well and give them good quality pastoral support. Consequently, pupils report that they feel safe and secure and they know who to turn to if they have a worry. When necessary, the school works closely with parents and outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being. Pupils in Year 4 are prepared well for their transfer to middle school. They especially like the way that video conferencing helps them to get to know their new classmates before they change school.

Academic support is good. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly. Teachers generally use this information well to ensure that differing needs are being met. Pupils are given regular feedback on their work and the school is beginning to extend the use of marking and target setting to help them understand further how to improve. This practice is not yet consistently good across the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and are given clear targets that help them to make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has successfully dealt with the issues from the last inspection and, despite the absence of a permanent headteacher, has demonstrated that there is a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Subject leaders use information from annual tests to adapt the curriculum and to plan suitable priorities for the next year.

The school has recently developed a system for tracking the progress of pupils and this is used to monitor the progress of individuals. Whilst pupils do well at this school, senior managers and governors do not have robust systems for evaluating the effectiveness of provision. As a result, they are not able to check that all pupils are doing equally well in all subjects. For example, information from tracking pupils' progress is not analysed to show differences in progress for different groups or to check the standards reached in each year group.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and very enthusiastic about the school. They are aware that they are not yet monitoring the school's work rigorously.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	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

28 June 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Tittensor C of E (C) First School, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST12 9HP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We are pleased that you come to this good school.

- Here are some other things about you and your school.
- You make good progress in most subjects. At the moment you do slightly less well in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 than in other subjects.
- You are polite and friendly and take responsibility well. Your school council helps teachers know what you would like to improve.
- You are taught well and your teachers help you to behave sensibly.
- You study an interesting range of topics in lessons. We are pleased that you understand the importance of staying safe and healthy. We especially like the way you grow your own food in the school gardens.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they look after you well.
- Your teachers and governors are working hard to make your school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you enjoy coming to this school.

- What we have asked your school to do now.
- Help those of you in Years 3 and 4 to learn more quickly in mathematics.
- Make sure that you always present your work well.
- Ensure that the leaders of your school use the information they have collected to check that you are all doing as well as you should.

- What we would like you to do
- Take more care with your work so that it is always tidy.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We hope your garden does well in the 'Stone in Bloom' competition.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Cartlidge Lead Inspector