

Summerbank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123980
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	316522
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Jenkins
Headteacher	Robert Shenton
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
School address	Summerbank Road Tunstall Stoke-on-Trent ST6 5HA
Telephone number	01782 233611
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Summerbank is a large primary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average and a high number of these pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is high and the number on roll has increased significantly over the past year.

When the school was inspected in November 2005, it was judged to require special measures. A new headteacher and deputy were appointed in April 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Summerbank provides a good education for its pupils. As a result of significantly improved leadership that has provided staff with a clear focus on raising standards, pupils are now making good progress, even though the legacy of inadequate teaching in the past means that standards are still below average when they leave at the end of Year 6. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are exceptionally low for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, numeracy and personal development. The 2007 national test results show an improvement in standards at both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved rapidly at Key Stage 2, the result of good teaching and much better tracking of their progress. Pupils' writing is getting better as a result of a consistent and more exciting approach to addressing the underperformance of groups of pupils, particularly boys. However, improvements in writing have been harder to achieve, and the school rightly acknowledges that it has not yet done enough to ensure pupils make good progress in all classes and across all subjects in this important key skill.

The pupils' improving attendance is evidence of their enjoyment of school. The successful personal development of pupils is a reflection of the good pastoral care provided by all staff. The behaviour of older pupils sets a good example for the rest of the school. Whilst most pupils live up to these expectations, a small number fall below them, usually where teaching is not as exciting or challenging. It is a pleasure to note the pride pupils have for their school, for example when they sing the school song. This pride is evident amongst those pupils who carry out duties as librarians, playground monitors, or members of the school council. Pupils feel safe in school, but whilst the school ensures that they have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit, they do not always put this understanding into practice.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving. It is good overall and this is the key reason behind pupils' good progress, but it is still variable. Teachers have considerably raised their expectations of what pupils can do and have become much better at matching work to different groups of pupils, but this aspect of planning is not yet consistently good in all classes. Nor is guidance as to how pupils of different abilities might improve their work in lessons. The marking of work is good and in the best examples is linked closely to the pupils' targets. A new topic and skills based approach to the curriculum is aimed at making it more interesting, but its introduction is too recent to have had a significant impact. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of visits, visitors and clubs and pupils are very appreciative of these.

The good improvement since the previous inspection has been underpinned by the clear direction set by the headteacher and the development of a senior leadership team that has been effective in implementing new initiatives, has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and has correctly identified the next stages for its improvement. Good monitoring of teaching and clear expectations of what pupils should achieve each term are systematically ensuring that pupils' achievement continues to rise. The school is well placed to continue its good improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They are well cared for, settle well, and begin to gain in confidence. In the Nursery, children make sound progress but do not always receive clear and helpful guidance when engaged in activities. Their skills and confidence develop rapidly in the Reception classes because of the good teaching and the provision of a rich variety of stimulating and exciting activities. Here, the careful structure to the work ensures that children's learning builds very well on previous work. The activities to develop the children's phonic skills are now proving effective and giving them a good foundation for developing reading and writing skills. The outside play area is used well as an outdoor classroom and the provision of wet weather gear enables its good utilisation in all weathers. Children's personal development is good. Children behave well and thoroughly enjoy school. Good opportunities to participate in role play activities effectively develop their social skills and they quickly learn how to take turns.

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed with good procedures to monitor children's development and good strategic plans to improve the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise and extend their writing across the curriculum.
- Ensure pupils make consistently good progress by lifting the quality of all teaching to that of the best, particularly by ensuring that all teachers match work and guidance closely to the needs of different ability groups.
- Make the curriculum more exciting by embedding the new topic and skills initiative across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Current work shows that the improvements in reading, mathematics and science clearly reflected in the 2007 test results are continuing, and standards are getting closer to national averages. Pupils are now making good progress overall, but there is still some unevenness. Pupils achieve particularly well in Years 5 and 6. The introduction of writing frameworks in Years 1 and 2 is accelerating pupils' progress. But although standards in writing have improved significantly, this is still the weakest area. Good support enables pupils who speak English as an additional language to make good progress. The significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress overall, but it is less marked in the classes where activities are sometimes not sufficiently fine tuned to meet their individual needs fully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

There are good relationships throughout the school and this has helped to create a good learning environment. Pupils' enthusiasm is reflected in their obvious enjoyment of lessons. Pupils particularly enjoy the visits that support learning and the good number of visitors that add interest to lessons. Whilst pupils are well aware of how to live a healthy lifestyle, too many do not put their knowledge into practice by choosing healthy foods to eat and taking plenty of exercise. Older pupils are fully aware of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The school council

confidently expresses its opinions and makes suggestions for improvements. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, and librarians and prefects are proud of the tasks they undertake.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The way in which the school celebrates the pupils' diverse ethnic backgrounds provides them with a particularly good understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live. Pupils support a good range of charitable activities and have a satisfactory involvement in their community. The pupils' good behaviour, developing social awareness, and improving basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are effective in ensuring pupils understand what it is they are learning, both during the introductions to lessons and through the use of pupil targets. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to measure their own progress through self and peer marking. Those pupils at an early stage of learning English are provided with good specialist support and this enables them to make progress at least in line with their peers. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities during individual or small group withdrawal sessions ensures that their good progress is kept on track. However, not all teachers manage to follow this up by pitching work at the correct level during lessons.

There is evidence of consistently good teaching in all year groups and this has ensured that pupils are now making good progress overall. However, the school rightly acknowledges that in a small number of classes teaching is only satisfactory, largely because teachers are not making the best use of assessment information to ensure work is always sufficiently challenging for all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a very clear emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although the school recognises that there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy skills, and especially writing, through other subjects. Music and arts feature strongly in the school's curriculum and make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development. The art work throughout the school is of a good quality and there are good opportunities for pupils to improve their singing. The school has recently introduced a new theme based curriculum but it has not yet evaluated its impact.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are looked after and cared for well. They feel safe and say there is an adult they can approach if they have a concern. Arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils are good and risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Child protection procedures are robust. The school has a good understanding of the needs of its pupils. A good range of information about how well pupils are doing is gathered. However, academic guidance is not so good. In particular, the use of assessment information is not yet sharp enough to cater for

the wide range of abilities in each class and make sure they all make consistently good progress in lessons. Those pupils who enter school later in the year are helped to settle quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is providing good leadership and he is being well supported by the senior leadership team and subject leaders. As a result, the quality of education provided by the school has improved dramatically. The leadership has been methodical in identifying how to raise standards. The introduction of new pupil writing frameworks, the provision of additional support for groups of pupils and a closer attention to assessing the rate of pupils' progress are all helping to improve standards. Good procedures to track pupils' progress are enabling the school to set challenging targets which, based on current rates of progress, it is likely to achieve. The senior leadership team has identified where teaching is not as strong and is already beginning to address the shortcomings. The school makes a considerable effort to reach out to the community, arranging courses that are well supported by parents. The school also works hard to involve parents directly in their children's learning, but they are not as responsive as the school would like.

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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?	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?	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2
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

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	2
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

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Summerbank Primary School, Tunstall ST6 5HA

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. Your school has improved a lot since I first started coming to visit you, and now provides you with a good education. You are now making good progress because of the good teaching, although it is not consistent as you move through the school. Your writing is improving, although not yet as good as it could be. The curriculum is satisfactory.

These are some of things we found.

- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to school.
- You behave well and are enthusiastic in lessons and during other activities.
- You know about keeping fit and eating healthily, although you do not always take enough exercise and eat the right foods.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make lessons and work better for you.

This is what the school needs to do to make it better.

- Help you to make even better progress in writing by ensuring you get lots of practice to write in different subjects.
- Make sure teaching is consistently good in all classes, especially by always giving help to those of you who find work too difficult, or indeed too easy.
- Make the curriculum more interesting for you by extending the new skills and topics approach.

You can do your bit by working hard to improve your writing. I am pleased that you enjoy school and wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping me with my work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead inspector

23 November 2007

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These are some of things we found.

- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to school.
- You behave well and are enthusiastic in lessons and during other activities.
- You know about keeping fit and eating healthily, although you do not always take enough exercise and eat the right foods.
- Staff look after you well and give you good support.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make lessons and work better for you.

This is what the school needs to do to make it better.

- Help you to make even better progress in writing by ensuring you get lots of practice to write in different subjects.
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Paul Edwards
Lead inspector