

# Ash Green Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124028
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	328032
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<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 (total)	462
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Leary
<b>Headteacher</b>	N M Addison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	The Lea Trentham Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 658977
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 642316

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## Introduction

- The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:
- how the school is raising standards in writing, especially of the more able pupils
- the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well the school promotes community cohesion.

Inspectors gathered evidence from performance data, observations of teaching, the work produced by pupils in lessons and on display throughout the school, observations of pupils at play and at lunch, and the school's audit of its provision for community cohesion. Parents' questionnaires, discussions with pupils, representatives of the governing body and some members of staff also contributed to the judgements. Inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail. Where inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

In this well above average size primary school the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and there are nine minority ethnic groups represented. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes a Nursery and two Reception classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Ash Green Primary provides an outstanding education for its pupils. The parents and pupils justifiably hold their school in very high regard, as shown by their extremely positive comments. As one pupil said, 'This school is about as good as it gets.' One of the key reasons for pupils' enthusiasm is the first-class curriculum which provides an excellent balance between creative, physical and academic work. A particular strength is the way in which different subjects are linked together to motivate and engage pupils, giving them extensive opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well threaded through the subjects to ensure that there are many occasions for pupils to extend their ICT skills. Pupils' high level of competence in applying their basic skills, and their outstanding personal development, ensure they are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education and for a future as lifelong learners.

On entry to the school in the Nursery, children have skills that are typical for their age and by the time they leave in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average and achievement is outstanding. Part of the school's success is due to its very high expectations extending to all areas of learning. Standards are above those expected in many subjects. For example, inspectors saw evidence of high quality artwork throughout the school. Pupils' outstanding progress is the result of very effective teaching. This is also the view of the pupils. 'I like my lessons because they're fun and we always have lots of interesting things to do,' typifies the comments made by pupils when inspectors asked what they enjoyed about school. Teachers plan work carefully and thoroughly, and teaching assistants play an active role in supporting pupils' learning well. Marking is regular, and often provides supportive comments. However, the guidance given to help pupils improve their work or move to the next stages of their learning, particularly for the more able pupils, is not consistent.

Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress enables school leaders to quickly identify any dips in attainment and take firm action to remedy the slightest weakness in pupils' academic performance. For example, they identified pupils' writing as an area for further development. This evaluation led to a clear plan of action, including staff training and a review of the way in which teaching could be improved, for example by reducing the amount of time pupils spend redrafting their writing. The impact of these actions is now seen in rising writing standards and reflects very positively on the school's capacity to make improvement.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of school life. Their impeccable behaviour contributes positively to the strong culture for learning that is a feature of all classes. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles, and speak informatively about making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise. They are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council, and in doing so they make an excellent contribution to the life of the school. They also contribute very well to the wider community through fundraising for local charities, and taking part in neighbourhood sporting, musical and art events. Attendance is well above the national average, confirming pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep safe both in and outside of school.

The driving force behind the school's success is the very high quality of leadership and management at all levels. Systems are firmly in place to secure improvement and the care, guidance and support that pupils receive is outstanding. All safe-guarding procedures are

securely in place. Self-evaluation is accurate and teamwork is outstanding. Together, all ensure that this is not a school that rests on its laurels, and constantly look for ways to improve even more. In addition, the school shows a strong commitment to promoting cohesion within and outside the school community. There are good links with different United Kingdom and global communities, for example schools in Ghana and Uganda. The way in which the school has maintained high academic standards while providing pupils with an extremely broad, well-rounded education is a clear indication of its outstanding capacity to improve. Comments such as, 'The quality of education and care given to my children during every school day is of the highest standard,' and, 'An excellent school, my kids love it!' confirm how well parents appreciate the work of this school.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides all children with a happy and secure start to their school career. They make good progress and attain standards that are above those found nationally in all areas of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. A very strong emphasis is given to developing their personal and social skills. These provide a very secure platform for learning as children move through the school. Children behave very well and cooperate well with others, sharing resources. They are very keen to learn and show a lot of enjoyment in all their activities. Teaching is good as staff work closely together to plan activities that will interest children. There is an outstanding focus on meeting the children's welfare needs that results in them feeling safe and happy in their work and play. The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been successful in ensuring that all welfare requirements are securely in place. She has rightly assessed that a more appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and those activities that children choose and develop for themselves, both in the indoor and outdoor environments, is required.

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

- Provide children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with sufficient opportunities to make decisions about choosing and developing their learning.
- Ensure teachers' marking provides pupils, especially those who are more able, with clear guidance on how to improve their work in order to move on to the next stages of learning.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ash Green Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 8BX

I am writing to thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome when we visited your school. We were really impressed with the super range of work you had displayed on the walls in the corridors and your classrooms. No wonder we were able to say that activities planned for you are outstanding. We really enjoyed talking to you and have good memories of how friendly you are. Your parents and carers should be very proud of your politeness and outstanding behaviour.

While in your school, we looked at how well you learn and we found out that by the time you leave in Year 6, you attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are higher than those found in most schools. Your achievement is outstanding, so well done! We looked at other parts of school life, including how teachers help you to understand about being healthy. When we asked you about this, you were so very good at telling us how much you knew about the importance of healthy eating, regular exercise and how to keep safe. Some of you, we know, are proud to be school councilors, and do a very good job in making suggestions about how to make sure your school keeps on getting better and better.

Your teachers work very hard to try and make things interesting for you. It was very pleasing when you told us your lessons were fun! This was very clear in Year 5 where pupils were enjoying playing a coordinates game. Teachers often praise your efforts in your work books, telling you it is 'brilliant', 'superb' or 'WoW!' They sometimes give you advice about why work is good and how to make it better. This advice is very helpful and so we have asked all teachers to try and do this more often, especially for those of you who could sometimes do harder work.

We found you get a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes. You behave well and are very happy to learn in these classes. One thing, however, we thought would make things even better is if you had more time to choose what you would like to do and develop your own ideas both in the classroom and in the outside play area.

Everything is so good in your school because you have outstanding leaders. We were very pleased to tell your headteacher that your school is outstanding and we know how proud the school is of all of you. Well done! We hope you all continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely,

Lois Furness

Lead inspector