

The Village Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111559
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	356941
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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 of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Aileen Mather
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Gibb
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, with eight different teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 96 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as 86 questionnaires from pupils and 19 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether actions taken by the school's leaders to improve teaching and the curriculum are leading to sustainable improvements in attainment and the rates at which pupils make progress.
- Whether current rates of progress in school are at least satisfactory and improving securely and quickly, so that achievement can be judged as at least satisfactory.

Information about the school

This school is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those with a statement of special educational needs are below average. The school achieved the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards in 2009. The school has provision for vulnerable children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has had a long period of absence due to illness.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In this satisfactory school, the senior leadership team, following a lack of continuity at senior level due to the headteacher's illness, has initiated strategies which are reversing a decline in standards and securing satisfactory progress. The initiatives are leading to improvements in teaching, the curriculum and the use of information about pupils' progress. While overall standards remain low in the current Year 6, the trend of pupils making inadequate progress has been reversed. Attainment is improving strongly overall. Teaching is improving, although it remains satisfactory overall as some lessons lack pace and challenge, especially for the most able. The headteacher is passionate about giving pupils memorable experiences and exciting opportunities to develop skills in sport, drama, art and singing, and in thinking skills. The curriculum does not yet offer pupils sufficient exciting opportunities to apply their skills in writing and mathematics in subjects across the curriculum. It is not always clear how work planned becomes progressively harder. Appropriate actions to reverse the decline in standards, based on secure evaluation of what to improve, indicates the school's satisfactory capacity for improvement.

All staff provide sensitive care and support so that pupils work and play well together, are happy and feel safe. Pupils are keen to learn, behave well and have a good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy. The school has much useful information about pupils' skills and abilities which is increasingly well used to identify the learning needs of individual pupils and to measure progress. However, such information is not yet used well enough to ensure that work is always matched closely to the needs of individual pupils, especially the most able. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the caring support they receive. Average attendance, improving attainment, developing skills in team work and in information and communication technology are ensuring that pupils' development of workplace skills is satisfactory.

Pupils have contributed strongly to developments in school. The introduction of playground friends and sports leaders makes break and lunchtimes more enjoyable. They have a strong sense of how to help others and a good understanding of life in different faiths and cultures because the school actively encourages pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. There are good partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils with a range of complex needs. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's work with them and of how it encourages pupils' social and moral development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the current school year, further increase the rates at which pupils make progress, and by the summer of 2012, raise pupils' attainment, especially for the most-able pupils, to higher levels, by:

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- improving the consistency of teaching so that all lessons have appropriate pace and challenge
 - providing more exciting opportunities for pupils to work together, solve problems and apply their skills, especially in extended writing, across a wider range of subjects
 - ensuring that the curriculum builds progressively on pupils' skills
 - ensuring that data are well used so that work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils, especially the most able.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is satisfactory. However, their enjoyment is higher when they are engaged in lively activities, such as rehearsing scenes from Macbeth, using drama to explore ideas for their newspaper accounts of the Vietnam War and discussing together to explore philosophical ideas. They have good attitudes, are polite, form positive relationships and are eager to do well in their work.

From starting points in Foundation 1, which are low for their age, pupils' attainment is low by the end of Year 6, making satisfactory progress overall. Attainment is improving securely, however, as a result of strongly directed teaching which has a clear focus on basic skills. Opportunities are missed for pupils to write at length and creatively or to apply their mathematics skills in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and they make satisfactory progress because of the sensitive support they receive.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their enthusiastic involvement in dance, football and exercise routines and the high take-up of the healthy school meals provided. They care for one another well, have great respect for each other and for different cultures and beliefs, and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern arising.

Pupils willingly make a positive contribution to the school community, by helping to ensure pupils play well together and through the school council. Pupils support a range of charities and participate in activities with the local church and in initiatives designed to improve the local environment. Average attendance, improving attainment and confidence in addressing an audience, ensure that pupils are equipped satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use skilful questioning to ascertain what pupils already know. They offer clear examples of the skills pupils are to learn to ensure that they are well supported in their learning. The best lessons have good pace and offer pupils the opportunity to practise new learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboard technology well to offer ideas to support writing and to allow pupils opportunities to display mathematical understanding. There is a particularly strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. However, in offering this guidance, teachers occasionally miss opportunities for pupils to share ideas and to investigate together. Marking tells pupils how well they have done and how to improve their work, although this is inconsistent across school. In less successful, though nonetheless satisfactory lessons, the pace of learning drops and there is a lack of challenge for the most able.

There is a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in all areas of learning, and the school has developed good links with outside agencies to support pupils' artistic, sporting and emotional development. The school has developed resources which are beginning to raise standards in reading. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to places of worship and links with a school in Malawi, offer many opportunities to learn about other cultures and the wider world. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs, which help pupils develop their skills in sporting and environmental activities, including drama and the development of the school garden.

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All staff have detailed knowledge about individual pupils so that they are well cared for and develop self-esteem, respect and a sense of responsibility. A key feature is the sensitive care for the pupils with a range of complex learning needs in the nurture class. The school works closely and frequently with families to support these pupils and this helps to achieve attendance that is line with national averages. Well-established practices see parents and carers playing key roles when their children enter school, move from class to class, and transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a commitment to improving the life chances and social and emotional development of pupils. Following her return from illness and working closely with the deputy headteacher, she has introduced initiatives that are reversing a decline in standards and improving the rates at which pupils make progress. The new leadership team is developing a clear understanding of the initiatives needed to help the school improve more rapidly. They have developed effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and have many ideas to make pupils' learning more interesting. These have not, as yet, had a significant impact on raising attainment in English and mathematics. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are involved in opportunities to contribute to curriculum development, decision making and the school improvement plan. The governing body has been instrumental in supporting the school through a period of instability, but misses opportunities to monitor learning and pupils' progress.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust, meet government requirements and secure pupils' safety. Close links with outside agencies support the wide range of individual needs of pupils. While there is a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities, to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided and to raising attainment, current rates of attainment and progress mean that the school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community. There is a good awareness of life in other countries and a clear understanding of Britain as a diverse, multicultural society. The school has introduced a range of effective initiatives to support parents' and carers' own learning and to involve them closely in their children's learning, including supporting learning at home and regular information about their children.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a wide range of ability, but children's skills on entry to Foundation 1 are well below those expected for their age overall, especially in personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress in most areas of learning, but are still below national average in emotional development and communication, language and literacy as they enter Year 1. Key worker groups offer high levels of care so that children feel safe, are confident and happy. They encourage children to share, to take turns and to behave well. Children thrive on imaginative activities such as managing a greengrocer's shop and hunting for pirate treasure, although some opportunities for independent learning are missed. They enjoy lively and effective interventions by their teacher, for example, when they learn to link sounds and letters. A range of healthy snacks and drinking water helps children to develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy, although some opportunities for hand washing are missed. Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are met. The new leader has a good understanding of how children learn and involves all adults in planning activities which are based on a strong commitment to outdoor learning and clear assessments of children's progress. Staff make it clear to parents and carers what children are learning, but opportunities are missed to share children's individual journeys. Partnerships with parents and carers enable children to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage classes and good arrangements exist for transition into Year 1.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire for parents and carers was in line with the average response rate in other primary schools. The respondents strongly support the school and its leaders and how they meet their child's needs, ensuring their child enjoys school, is healthy and safe. Most parents and carers are strongly supportive of the way the school informs them about their child's progress and helps them support their child at home. The inspection reflects the view that these are positive features of the school. Most parents and carers believe that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress and are well prepared for their futures. While the inspection acknowledges that the school strives hard to achieve these things, inspectors believe that opportunities are missed to give pupils hands-on learning opportunities in English and mathematics and this slows pupils' progress. Most parents and carers believe that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. A very small minority expressed concern about behaviour. Inspectors investigated this concern in detail and believe that the school is employing appropriate and effective strategies to help pupils behave well and to minimise disruption to the learning of others.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Village Primary to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 244 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	53	45	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	58	40	42	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	43	48	50	6	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	45	47	49	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	49	51	42	44	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	44	45	47	6	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	48	45	47	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	38	49	51	1	1	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	38	57	59	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	34	45	47	12	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	33	52	54	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	49	45	47	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	50	44	46	3	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Village Primary, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 8PW

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a satisfactory school which is improving because your teachers know what to do to make it better. The team was impressed by your behaviour, politeness and the great care and respect you have for one another. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. You work hard in lessons, especially those where you are doing exciting activities like acting and singing; we enjoyed listening to you very much. Your teachers take great care of you and are trying hard to make your lessons more exciting for you. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

We have asked your school to improve even more, by:

- helping you reach higher standards at the end of Year 6, by providing more exciting opportunities for you to investigate together, solve problems and apply your skills in exciting activities
- making sure that all your lessons are as good as your best lessons
- making sure that all the information that teachers have about how well you are doing is used to plan work that is at the right level of challenge for all of you.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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