

Scholar Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111039
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	356850
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Pat Morgan
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
School address	Congleton Road Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST7 3HF
Telephone number	01270 685181
Fax number	01782 775001
Email address	head@scholargreen.cheshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six teachers in 10 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' plans, pupils' books, assessments and tracking of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, school policies, and examined 71 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- Whether the more able pupils are achieving as well as they can.
- Whether teaching is consistent in supporting learning and progress through the school.
- The extent to which the actions of leaders are bringing about improvements.

Information about the school

All the pupils in this smaller than average primary school are from a White British background. One of the six classes has pupils from more than one age group. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The previous headteacher was in post for three years and left at the end of August 2010. There has been an acting headteacher since September 2010 and she has been appointed to the permanent position from January 2011. The deputy headteacher retired in August 2009 and there is an acting assistant headteacher. The privately run pre-school setting and the before- and after-school provision available at Scholar Green are subject to a separate inspection.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Amongst its strengths are the good care, guidance and support it provides along with the robust procedures for the safeguarding of pupils. Most aspects of pupils' personal development are good.

After several years when attainment was significantly above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, results fell to just below average in 2008 in both key stages. Provisional assessments show a considerable improvement in 2010 with a greater proportion of pupils achieving the expected level overall and an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in Year 6 in both English and mathematics. This was because of the good teaching in Years 2 and 6 and the arrangements last year for setting pupils according to ability in Year 6, together with smaller teaching groups.

The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was judged satisfactory though there were some lessons where teaching was good. The school's records show pupils make satisfactory progress overall but this is accelerated in Year 2 and Year 6 where teaching is stronger. The school has set challenging targets for all classes for the current year to improve progress and attainment. Meetings have been timetabled for the headteacher and class teachers to identify any underachievement at an early stage and provide additional support where necessary.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and there is a suitable range of practical activities in all areas of learning. Those activities led by an adult are suitably focused on developing skills and understanding. However, those activities that children choose independently do not always have a clear focus on learning. There are good systems for assessing children's progress though these are not always used effectively to match activities to children's needs. The school has invested in developing an attractive outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection to enhance children's learning. However, there are missed opportunities for children to use these facilities throughout the day.

The school has undergone significant changes in management and staffing since the last inspection though the situation has now stabilised. The Chair of Governors, the new headteacher and the acting assistant headteacher share the same vision. They have an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and where improvements are needed. The role of the subject leaders is developing though not enough is done to involve them in monitoring and evaluating learning across the school. The recent school development plan provides a clear strategy for taking the school forward and has already resulted in a more practical approach to learning to improve pupils' understanding. Therefore, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by July 2011 by:-
 - increasing the proportion of teaching that is good
 - using assessment information and expectations to ensure pupils are making the required progress in each class
 - developing the role of the subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating learning in their subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:-
 - making full use of all facilities, including the outdoors, and ensuring that all activities have a clear focus on learning
 - using assessment information to provide appropriate challenge for all children.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy their lessons when they are actively involved, for example, when using cubes to help them spot a pattern when adding numbers. Pupils cooperate well with each other when discussing how to solve a problem, and this cooperation and their good behaviour promote learning well. Learning is less effective when pupils spend too long listening to the teacher rather than trying things out for themselves.

Pupils enter the school with a range of skills, that overall are typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall and attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at a similar rate to others academically though they make good progress in terms of their behaviour.

Pupils say they feel safe and appreciate the secure and supportive environment. Relationships are good and pupils have confidence that they can talk to an adult should they have a problem. They have a good understanding of the value of diet and exercise in achieving a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to the school community through a range of responsibilities. The elected school council has a clear voice in school and is currently working on developing a new team points system. Good attendance, confidence in expressing their views and the ability to work with others prepare pupils well for the future. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are attentive to the needs of others, for example, pupils in Year 2 were aware that they needed to be quiet when going on a shape walk round school as, 'learning is going on and it isn't fair to interrupt!' Pupils' understanding of different faiths and of other cultures is limited, for example, they are not always able to name the places of worship used by different religions.

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

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	3
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory and some examples of good teaching were observed in Years 2 and 6. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied and pupils respond well. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss and work together though sufficient time is not always allowed to share and compare ideas with the rest of the class. Assessment procedures are improving but the information is not always used to challenge the more able pupils. Where teaching is good, lessons move at a fast pace and pupils engage in a good range of practical activities to promote understanding. Systems for marking pupils' work are developing and are helping pupils to improve their work. The skills of the learning assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school is focusing on an identified weakness by providing more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills by solving problems and investigating in mathematics and science. The school has introduced a more practical approach to mathematics to promote understanding and to address gaps in pupils' learning. However, it is too soon to have had a measurable impact on attainment. The school is developing links between subjects to maximise learning, for example, by writing about experiments and drawing graphs in science. The programme for personal, social and health education is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development. There is a good range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum.

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

The school provides a welcoming environment in which pupils say they feel safe and secure. There are good procedures for introducing pupils to school and to prepare them for the high school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the most vulnerable, are identified at an early stage. They receive good support and nurturing and this has been particularly effective in improving attitudes and behaviour. This is now beginning to have a positive impact on their progress.

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 new headteacher has quickly gained an understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. The good systems for tracking pupils' progress, devised by the assistant headteacher, have been used to set challenging targets for pupils' progress in each class, and to identify any underachievement at an early stage. It is too soon to evaluate any measurable impact on attainment. The school has a commitment to equality of opportunity and is using information to tackle the varying rates of progress across the school. Subject leaders are knowledgeable but are not involved fully in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress in their area of responsibility.

The Chair of Governors is a regular presence in school and has provided valuable and informed support during times of significant change in leadership and staffing. New members of the governing body are undertaking training to develop their role in supporting the work of the school. The recommended systems for safeguarding pupils are in place and given high priority. The views of pupils, parents and carers are taken into account and acted upon and so they say they have confidence in the school's rigorous procedures.

There are good partnerships with others, including the on-site pre-school group. The school has access to a wide variety of other professionals through links with the local authority and this provides valuable support for the most vulnerable.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has good links with the local community, including the pre-school and before and after school clubs on site. However, the school is aware of the need to establish links further afield to help pupils to gain a greater awareness of people from different ethnic groups and cultures.

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

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception Year with a range of skills that overall are broadly typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress and the majority of children reach the recommended goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. There is a particular strength in personal, social and emotional development because of the high priority rightfully placed on this area of learning. There is good interaction during those activities led by an adult to develop children's skills. However, when children are learning through play, adults are not always effectively deployed to guide them sufficiently towards enhancing their learning. There has been a good improvement in the outdoor facilities since the last inspection though access to this important resource is restricted for significant periods of the day. There are good systems for assessing children's progress though the information is not always used effectively to provide appropriate challenge. Children are developing a good understanding of how to keep safe as they are taught how to use simple tools, such as scissors, correctly.

There are good links with the pre-school group on-site, and this helps children settle quickly into school and develop independence at an early stage. Children take books home regularly to share with parents and carers and some parents and carers make comments in the home/school diary. Staff are suitably trained and all the recommended systems for safeguarding children are in place.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

An above average number of questionnaires were received from parents and carers. Of these parents and carers, the vast majority say that the school keeps their children safe and deals well with any unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors endorse these views. Parents and carers feel that teaching is good and inspectors judged it to be satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Scholar Green Primary School 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 149 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	68	22	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	70	17	24	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	51	27	38	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	46	27	38	5	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	37	52	29	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	51	32	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	44	37	52	1	1	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)	35	49	31	44	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	51	30	42	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	48	31	44	2	3	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	39	35	49	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	44	33	46	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	58	28	39	1	1	0	0

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.



8 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scholar Green Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3HF

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in groups. We think you are polite, friendly and well behaved, which is a credit to you, your parents and carers and your school.

We think Scholar Green is a satisfactory school. This means that there are many good things about it and some things that could be better. Staff take good care of you; you get on well together and carry out your responsibilities efficiently. I know you have plans for developing your wonderful grounds. You make satisfactory progress with your learning and you are working at the level that is expected for your age.

It is part of our job to suggest ways to help the school to improve. The adults are going to help you to attain even higher standards by:

- ensuring that even more lessons are good (we know some already are)
- checking that you are making enough progress in each class.

We have also asked that children in the Reception class get to use the outdoor area throughout the day.

Best wishes to you all and I hope you continue to enjoy school and to come to school so regularly.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead inspector

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