

# Ball Green Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124020
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	380775
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Straw

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neil Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon May
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2008
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 9 teachers and teaching assistants and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They also spoke informally with parents and carers bringing their children to school. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at work in pupils' books, assessment data and records, the school improvement plan, policies and checked safeguarding documents and procedures. They also considered 40 questionnaire responses from parents and carers as well as responses from 90 pupils and 15 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How far pupils' progress has accelerated since the last inspection, particularly that of higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Explore pupils' work in mathematics to check whether previous underachievement has been remedied.
- Whether changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have resulted in improved outcomes for children.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high, over half of all pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds a number of awards among which are Healthy School status, the Eco bronze award, Bikeability and the Quality in Study Support Mark.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This good school provides outstanding care, guidance and support, ensuring all pupils are safe, secure and keen to learn. The pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Pupils reflect the high quality care they receive in their good behaviour and good relationships with their teachers and one another. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'We like this school because you can always rely on someone to be there for you, because we are like a big family.' The school's partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Many commented on the positive atmosphere and good progress their children make.

Achievement is good and attainment is average. Most children enter the Nursery with skills well below what is typical for their age. They make good progress as a result of good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage but are still below the national average by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 6 they have reached national standards in mathematics and English. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school aided by their good behaviour and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Good arrangements for equal opportunities mean that girls and boys progress equally well, as do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as a result of skilled support. However, there are some missed opportunities to promote the progress of higher-attaining pupils and this is why the school's promotion of equal opportunities is not outstanding. A major drive has successfully improved writing and mathematical skills. Pupils' performance in reading lags behind and the school now has an action plan to address this. Good teaching provides well-planned activities that engage pupils' interest and learning well.

The inspiring headteacher and deputy headteacher are well supported by staff and members of the governing body in their commitment to achieve ambitious targets for school improvement. Self-evaluation is honest, rigorous and accurate, expressed in well-focused development plans. Improvements since the last inspection are substantial and include consistently good teaching, a stimulating and exciting curriculum and improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of which have accelerated the progress of pupils across the school. This gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 by:
  - achieving the school's action plan target to ensure every child is a confident reader by the end of Key Stage 1
  - increasing pupils' enjoyment of reading in Key Stage 2 and fostering pupils' use of expression and tone in reading aloud
  - targeting support for higher-attaining pupils so that a greater proportion reach Level 5 in English and mathematics.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils say that they enjoy 'learning new things every day and doing projects'. Observations show that pupils work hard, concentrate and show good attitudes to learning. Throughout the school good relationships mean that pupils cooperate well with each other and with staff. They respond with enthusiasm to the creative lessons planned for them. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils were introduced to the topic of slavery by the teacher dressed as a slave-master, issuing tasks and hardships. Pupils built up empathy and understanding, before having this reinforced through video, discussion and written work.

All pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Well-organised support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress. The school is currently developing a new strategy to help slower readers to build up their confidence and enjoyment in reading; early indications are that this is having a good impact on pupils' progress. School data and inspection findings show that progress for all pupils has accelerated rapidly since 2009 and this is due to better use of assessment information, improved teaching and a stimulating curriculum.

Pupils fully embrace the school's positive strategies regarding healthy living. They demonstrate their commitment to healthy lifestyles by eating healthily, participating in many sports, attending healthy cookery clubs and walking and cycling to school. Bullying is not regarded as a problem and pupils of all ages are confident that any issues will be swiftly dealt with by adults. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the school council monitors the behaviour policy. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of their own and other cultures. They enjoy taking on responsibilities such as becoming head girl and boy or house captains, serving on the school and eco councils and acting as helpers for staff in the library, classrooms and playgrounds. Pupils are keen fundraisers and particularly enjoy baking cakes for charity sales. Pupils' good personal skills and their average attainment and attendance ensure that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use resources imaginatively. They plan lessons that enthuse and engage pupils. Most lessons are planned to challenge pupils of different abilities, including higher-attaining pupils. Sometimes opportunities are missed to use different approaches for such pupils so that they move on quickly once they have mastered what is being taught. In the drive to improve standards in reading teachers sometimes do not give enough encouragement to pupils to read aloud with style and confidence. Detailed feedback is provided through marking so that pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve. A striking feature is the attention given to homework which is displayed and celebrated in many areas of the school giving pupils a sense of pride in their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive extra support in lessons, in the nurture room and in small group sessions which build up their confidence and enjoyment of school so that they make good progress.

The good curriculum makes a major contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. It is well organised, imaginative, provides strong stimulus for learning and includes real-life experiences and examples where possible. Basic skills are promoted well with a good focus on information and communication technology (ICT). Outstanding displays around school demonstrate pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own and healthy lifestyles; 'fantastic homework', Olympic pledges, marvellous models and some astonishing 'mad-hatter's hats' give a flavour of the range of pupils' interests and enthusiasms. The curriculum is enhanced by partnerships with local secondary schools and the community. Enrichment opportunities are numerous with sports, cookery, drama and library clubs being especially popular.

Pupils are nurtured from the moment they arrive at school. Toast is available for all pupils and their parents and carers to purchase at the door each morning. The very strong climate of mutual respect ensures that pupils feel safe and ready to learn. Pupils are known as individuals. Transition arrangements into school, through classes

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

and on to secondary schools are excellent. The school works very well with families, and parents and carers appreciate the support and encouragement they and their children receive. Action to improve attendance has been successful so that it is now average overall with over half of all pupils registering above average attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She has been instrumental in ensuring that leadership and management are good across the school. Senior managers set high expectations and lead by example. Staff morale is high and there is a shared sense of purpose. Good arrangements for equal opportunities ensure that pupils enjoy everything the school offers and the small gaps in achievement in the performance of girls and boys are narrowing rapidly. The management of teaching and learning is rigorous, with points for improvement linked to teachers' professional development and always with the aim of raising standards. The governing body is effective in monitoring the school's performance systematically, often by direct personal observation, and holds the school to account to overcome weaknesses. The business manager is a valued member of the leadership team and, together with the headteacher, ensures that the school provides good value for money.

Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Numerous opportunities are provided to help them to engage in their children's education and support their learning. Regular questionnaires, newsletters about progress, events and activities enable parents and carers to be consulted and informed. The family support worker ensures that all families are comfortable about coming into school to voice any concerns they may have. A good range of partnerships with other schools and agencies brings additional expertise and experiences the school could not alone provide. For example, work with one local secondary school brings specialist sporting opportunities which contribute to good and outstanding outcomes for pupils.

The school implements good safeguarding procedures, overseen continuously by the governing body. Regular staff training takes place and the building and site are well maintained and very secure. Actions to promote community cohesion result in a harmonious school environment and strong links at local level. Links beyond the local area are less well developed but the school has an action plan to address this.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents and carers value the excellent provision for care and welfare that ensures their children feel safe and settle quickly, ready to learn. Good teaching has accelerated progress from satisfactory to good for boys and girls. By the time children reach the end of the Reception year some have reached the expected goals for their age but attainment in language development and early reading, writing and mathematics is lower than what is expected for their age.

A very well-planned range of interesting learning activities encourages children to explore, investigate and discuss. The children behave well because they are busy enjoying their tasks, weighing items, baking a cake for Goldilocks’ birthday party, painting pictures, reading and making models. The outside learning area which was identified at the last inspection as needing improvement is now outstanding. In addition to all the expected areas for learning, woodland has been turned into an exciting feature where children can study wildlife, enjoy pond dipping and feed and watch birds and insects. Activities chosen by the children are well balanced by those led by adults. Progress is tracked well especially when children are working in small groups with different adults on focused activities such as learning letters and sounds. However, some progress records lack sufficient detail. Staff have plans in place to further develop and refine assessment procedures. Good leadership has established a strong and united staff team. Adults are well deployed and are all fully committed to improving provision which is already good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



## **Views of parents and carers**

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire and all those spoken to during the inspection were entirely confident that their children are safe. They were particularly positive about the good progress their children make, the commitment of the staff and the excellent leadership of the headteacher.

A very small minority expressed individual concerns which were discussed with the school. One parental comment referred to how the school should listen to pupils read more often. Inspectors found that the school is currently making pupils' progress in reading a priority and has good plans in place to promote reading.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ball 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	73	10	25	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	29	73	10	25	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	58	15	38	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	63	14	35	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	26	65	13	33	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	63	14	35	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	65	12	30	1	3	1	3
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)	24	60	13	33	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	68	12	30	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	60	12	30	2	5	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	55	17	43	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	26	65	13	33	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	68	12	30	0	0	1	3

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ball Green Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 8AJ**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and hearing your views and opinions. You told us that you are proud of your school and feel you are making good progress.

We agree that you should be proud because yours is a good school. You behave well, learn with enthusiasm and show respect to each other and your teachers. You have an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. You told us that you feel safe and appreciate the outstanding care that adults take of you. We were impressed by your willingness to take on responsibilities and your concern to protect the environment and raise money for different charities.

Teaching is good in your school so that you make good progress. You obviously enjoy the many different activities provided. We were impressed by the displays of your 'fantastic homework' and the astonishing mad-hatter's hats you were making in preparation for your visit to see 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Your headteacher, all the other teachers and the governors are determined to make things even better for you. We have asked them to help you to make faster progress in your reading in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and to try to ensure that more of you reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics.

You can help by continuing to be proud of your school, listening to your teachers and attending every day.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw  
Lead inspector

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