

Silkmore Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124204
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359606
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Marsden
Headteacher	Julie Mowbray
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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Telephone number	01785 356105
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Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
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Registered Childcare provision	The Launch Pad
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	19
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons taught by 4 teachers. They observed assemblies, break times and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Parents and carers at the school gate were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at progress records, teachers' lesson plans, pupils' work, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed completed questionnaires returned by 42 pupils, 68 parents and carers and 17 staff.

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

- Do pupils make good enough progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2?
- Does teaching provide work that closely matches the needs of every pupil so that all the class are fully challenged?
- Do improvement plans have sufficient rigour to ensure progress is good for all children and pupils?

Information about the school

Silkmore Community is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British families. The remainder come from a wide range of ethnic heritages. A few of them speak English as an additional language and several are at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils who take free school meals is above average. A larger number of pupils than is usual join or leave the school part way through the year. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these have specific learning difficulties and behaviour, physical and speech and language needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class. The school has recently gained a number of awards including Dyslexia Friendly status. The Launch Pad child care and Nursery on site is managed by the governors and was inspected. The Children's Centre on site is independently managed and was not part of the 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. In its very caring atmosphere, pupils feel very safe, behave well and grow into articulate young people. They enjoy all aspects of school and most attend very regularly. Children get off to a good start in the Reception, where they make good progress. The Launch Pad child care and Nursery setting provides a stimulating atmosphere and very safe place for its children. Parents and carers are very pleased with the standard of education the school provides. One told an inspector, 'My child loves school and is very happy. The teachers keep me well informed about his progress and do their best to sort out any worries that I have about his education.'

Effective plans have led to strong improvement since the last inspection. Under the determined and unwavering leadership of the headteacher, attainment has risen from low to average. Progress and behaviour have improved and are good. Teaching, the curriculum and leadership are now judged as good. Care guidance and support are outstanding. The school has successfully tackled some recent slow progress in mathematics so that progress in this subject is good. The school has sustained the good effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Subject leaders support the headteacher well and take full responsibility for standards in their areas of responsibility. Leaders' rigorous monitoring of the school's performance provides them with secure and accurate information for self-evaluation. This leadership record shows the school has a good capacity to improve further.

In lessons pupils try their best and work hard. Relationships are positive. Well-qualified teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. Teaching is not yet outstanding because occasionally the work provided does not match precisely the needs and ability of every member of the class. When this happens the pace of learning slows for some pupils. Marking provides pupils with clear instructions about how they can make their work better. However, older pupils are not able to take a good measure of responsibility for their progress because they do not know their target levels or those at which they are currently working. The curriculum provides many educational visits and residential activities that widen horizons and raise aspirations. Staff use their knowledge of every pupil expertly to provide them with high standards of pastoral care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a rapid pace of learning is sustained throughout lessons by matching work precisely to the needs and abilities of every pupil so that all the class are fully stretched.

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- Enable older pupils to take a good level of responsibility for their learning by providing them with details of the levels at which they are working and those that they are expected to reach.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children's skills on entry to the school are low. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, enjoy learning, and their achievement is good. The learning observed in lessons was consistently good. Pupils were keen to learn and take pride in their work. They were curious and enjoyed answering teachers' questions, which were effective in promoting their self-confidence, communication skills and understanding. They used peer and self-assessment very well to judge the quality of their work and to understand how it can be made better. Mostly, pupils concentrate well, even when they find the work hard. Their proficiency as independent learners is developing effectively, particularly when they work with their peers in solving problems for themselves and making decisions about the direction of their investigations. When discussing ideas in larger groups, a minority of pupils do not listen carefully enough to the views of others; this diminishes their contribution to the debate and detracts from their learning.

Progress in mathematics has accelerated because pupils' skills at solving mathematical problems have improved strongly. The school has successfully provided many practical resources, such as computers and educational games, which have raised attainment in this area of mathematics. These resources have also promoted pupil' enjoyment of the subject. Progress in reading at Key Stage 1, which was satisfactory recently, has improved. This is because the school has worked closely with parents and carers to help them support their child's reading at home. Also successful is the one-to-one teaching for those whose reading progress is slow; this has enabled them to make rapid gains.

Pupils say that the incidences of bullying have reduced significantly over recent years and that they are now rare. They feel that the school deals with any cases quickly. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet. Pupils do their best to take plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet. Their understanding of illnesses that can be brought about by unhealthy lifestyles is relatively weak. Pupils feel well informed about the dangers of smoking and drug abuse. As members of the school council and as monitors, they are keen to take responsibility. Charities are generously supported. Many take responsibility for a local green by keeping it free from litter and by planting bulbs and flowers. Positive attitudes towards school and average standards in basic skills mean preparation for secondary school is satisfactory. Pupils reflect maturely on their actions and those of others. A strong moral code underpins their good behaviour. The many opportunities they have to work with their peers from backgrounds different to Silkmore mean they have a well-developed understanding of the diversity of British culture.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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 plan work that pupils find interesting and relevant. Their questions are challenging and really make pupils think deeply. Occasionally some members of the class are not fully stretched because they find the work either too easy or too hard. Teaching assistants help pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities concentrate on their work. They provide them with individual help to improve their reading, vocabulary and calculation so that they make good gains in these basic skills. They keep records of every child's progress which are passed to the teacher; these make a valuable contribution to planning challenging next steps.

The curriculum supports many aspects of personal development well. For example, lively assemblies provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to improve computer, writing and numeracy skills through subjects such as geography and science. Most pupils take the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and music is a strong feature of the school. This adds to pupils' enjoyment and promotes their self confidence. Pupils relish the many sports and other clubs on offer and participation rates are high.

Pupils readily approach a member of staff with a problem because they are very confident that their worries will be quickly resolved. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with sensitive support. For example, the school provides expert support for pupils with dyslexia to overcome their difficulties and this is recognised in the

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school's national award. It works very closely with outside agencies to assess specific needs and develop learning programmes for pupils at the early stages of learning English. It makes regular and robust checks to ensure that only those who need support are on the special needs register. The school provides effective support and guidance for a significant minority of its families who face challenging circumstances; this has helped to strongly improve behaviour and attendance across the school. Pupils who arrive part way through their primary education are given a warm welcome and settle quickly into the routines of school. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective. Children in Launch Pad are cared for very well. For example, they are provided with healthy snacks and a high standard of personal support from well-qualified adults in the setting.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff enthusiastically embrace the headteacher's challenging and clearly articulated targets for the school. Leaders' checks on pupils' progress are regular and effective. They ensure appropriate work is quickly provided for any whose progress slows so that they can catch up missed work. Leaders, backed up by productive partnerships with the local authority, have provided successful training that has sharpened teachers' skills; for example, in planning exciting problem-solving lessons in mathematics. In their quest to be even better, leaders are correctly working hard to fine-tune teachers' planning so that they sustain a fast pace of learning throughout lessons. The governing body works hard on behalf of the school. It is challenging the school robustly over its effectiveness.

The school is committed to equal opportunities. The good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who do not speak English as their first language show that its policies have a positive impact. Safety and safeguarding are given a high priority in both school and the Launch Pad. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are rigorous. Lessons on safety and safeguarding provide pupils with a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school is a happy and harmonious community in which pupils from all backgrounds integrate well. Its promotion of wider community cohesion is developing strongly. For example, the school promotes a youth club which has strong support from the police and fire services. The school is developing links with communities abroad to extend further pupils' understanding of diversity.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress across all areas of learning. Progress in physical development is especially good, for example, because staff provide many opportunities for children to practise their hand and eye co-ordination. Last year, the progress made by girls in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world was good but behind that of the boys. In response, the school is now providing girls with more opportunities to expand their knowledge, for example of animal names and of places, through educational trips to the zoo and the seaside. Children are very safe and well looked after in the setting. Children are polite and well behaved. They are gaining good levels of independence through registering themselves on arrival to school. They are taking a good level of responsibility for clearing up resources at the end of a lesson. Parents and carers are very pleased with the information they receive about their child's progress. They value the opportunities they have to work with their children in lessons and the advice they are given on how they can help them with their learning at home.

The good teaching provides an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. For example, in one lesson seen, a group working with the teacher were making rapid gains in their reading by predicting what would happen next in a story and then reading it to see if their ideas were correct. Another group had chosen to work with a programmable car. They were making good progress in understanding number by successfully programming the model to move down a road and park itself in a spot they had pre-determined. The school has plans to make full use of the large outdoor learning area once its refurbishment is completed. During the inspection the temporary outdoor learning area was underused, for example to promote physical development and children's independence.

To identify where further improvements can be made the school has clear plans to bring together examples of children's work to strengthen its evaluation of progress. Leaders are

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successfully improving the early learning skills of adults in the setting, which is underpinning children's good progress.

Children in the Launch Pad enjoy their learning and are busily involved in well-planned activities both inside the classroom and in the outdoor learning area. They are well behaved and are quickly developing good social skills that will help them settle into Reception. Leaders in the setting liaise effectively with Early Years Foundation Stage staff to ensure learning programmes are appropriate.

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

A higher-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. Their comments indicate that they believe their children are very safe, enjoy school and are very well cared for. They feel the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good. Some commented on the good communication between school and home. The inspection endorses these views. A few parents and carers thought that their children's progress was not good enough. The inspection found that in the recent past, progress in mathematics was slow for many pupils. It concluded that the school's procedures to address this shortcoming have been effective and that progress across the school is now good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Silkmore Community 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	60	25	37	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	60	26	38	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	56	29	43	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	49	29	43	6	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	51	32	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	47	36	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	38	40	59	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)	27	40	40	59	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	47	35	51	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	47	29	43	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	40	40	59	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	50	34	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	62	22	32	3	4	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

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">■ 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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Silkmore Community Primary School, Stafford, ST17 4EG

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed joining the Reception class and seeing you enjoy your work so much. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Silkmore is a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

You get off to a happy start in the 'Launch Pad' and Reception.

You told us you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.

You work hard in lessons and make good progress.

Your behaviour is good.

You have good relationships with your teachers.

The curriculum provides you with plenty of music and exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you very well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working together to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help you do even better in your learning:

- to improve your progress in lessons by making sure that your work makes everyone think hard
- to provide older pupils with their target levels and the levels at which they are working in lessons so that each one can take greater responsibility for their learning.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and attending regularly. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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