



# Joiners Square Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123993  
**LEA** Stoke-On-Trent  
**Inspection number** 281601  
**Inspection dates** 14 June 2006 to 15 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Lois Furness AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hazelhurst Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Hanley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 3HF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 234630
<b>Number on roll</b>	205	<b>Fax number</b>	01782 234631
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Councillor B G Stockley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs H Pickin

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 June 2006 - 15 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281601
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Joiners Square Primary is an average size school serving an area of significant disadvantage. Pupils are mostly of White British heritage although twelve other ethnic backgrounds are represented. Approximately one fifth of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school not at the normal time is above average and, over the past few years, there have been an increasing number of asylum seeker children. Attainment on entry to the school in the Nursery is well below that expected for the children's age. The school building is in a very poor state of repair and outside space is very limited. The school is expected to move to new accommodation in February 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Good relationships and good opportunities to understand the importance of living in a community, along with effective pastoral care, mean that pupils mainly enjoy school, understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe and eagerly try to make school life better. However, weaknesses in academic guidance result in unsatisfactory achievement throughout Years 1 to 6. Tracking and target setting procedures are inefficient and the leadership is unable to check rigorously how well pupils are learning or ensure that teachers are accountable for their progress. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Assessment information is inaccurate and information about what pupils already know is not used well enough to provide work that meets the full range of needs within each class. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of and by the time they leave school in Year 6, standards are exceptionally low. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection. Pupils do not have the basic skills necessary to prepare them satisfactorily for their next stage of education.

Knowing that standards need to improve, the school has implemented some remedial actions and some of these are working well. For example, children in the Foundation Stage now get a good start because of improved provision and their progress is good. However, other actions such as involving pupils more in what they are learning are not happening in all classrooms, even though this is agreed practice. The checking of the school's work is insufficiently rigorous and the leadership has too generous a view of its own work because evaluation does not focus sufficiently on pupils' learning. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money, and inadequate leadership and management means that the school lacks the capacity to improve without support.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy and the use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged and shown how to improve.
- Develop efficient tracking and target setting procedures in order to rectify shortcomings in pupils' achievement more quickly.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels by having a more rigorous approach to the evaluation of teaching and its effectiveness in raising pupils' achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Achievement and standards are inadequate. When children start at the school, many have skills well below those expected for their age, particularly in their spoken language. According to past assessment information, many children exceeded the goals expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage, but this was not a true reflection of children's attainment. This year, more accurate assessments have been made and although children now make good progress, few are reaching the goals expected in all areas of learning. Speech and language remains a weakness which is affecting pupils' writing standards throughout the school.

The progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 6 is unsatisfactory. Overall standards are exceptionally low by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' workbooks and assessment information show that they make inconsistent progress. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make unsatisfactory progress except when they are supported by teaching assistants; then their progress is satisfactory.

The school did not achieve its targets in 2005. Assessment information indicates that the challenging targets set for 2006 will be met, but pupils' work does not substantiate these assertions. This is particularly evident in science, where Year 6 pupils' work shows little evidence of good scientific understanding. In Year 2 also, some teacher assessment judgements are not supported by the pupils' current work.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. A good start is made in the Foundation Stage, where children are happy and safe. Pupils show respect for each other and develop positive relationships. The school council has played a full part in helping to decide upon improvements to the facilities, especially in the playground. The older pupils adopt responsibilities willingly. They help the younger ones at lunchtime and share books as 'reading buddies'. Groups of pupils such as the 'Songbirds' join with other schools effectively in musical activities whilst others take part in sporting events.

Pupils have good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and despite the constraints of the school site, they take exercise regularly. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe from bullying and racism. They understand that there are risks to face and are developing satisfactory strategies to deal with them. Most pupils enjoy learning and their attendance is satisfactory. They speak enthusiastically about different visits they have made, particularly to the local sports stadium.

Pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work and this is evident in poor presentation, particularly by the older pupils. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are not developed adequately to prepare pupils well for future life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate because it does not fully meet the range of needs of all pupils in Years 1 to 6. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good overall with particular strengths in Reception. Teaching assistants are used well in this key stage to support children's language development and to enable them to make good progress. This good progress does not continue throughout the rest of the school because teachers do not have accurate information about pupils' prior learning. Pupils of differing abilities are too often given work at the same level of difficulty. Teachers' expectations of presentation are too low and work of poor quality is too readily accepted. In some subjects, for example science and geography, there is an unacceptable amount of unmarked work. In lessons, the sharing of the learning intentions with the pupils is inconsistent and ends of lessons are not used well to review learning. Assessments made are sometimes too optimistic and not all teachers have a secure understanding of what is needed to achieve a particular National Curriculum level.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 4

The school teaches all the subjects that it should, but the curriculum is inadequate because planning does not ensure satisfactory progress for pupils in Years 1 to 6. In these year groups, the curriculum does not build upon what pupils can already do or fill the gaps in their skills and knowledge. There are too few checks by managers to ensure that these shortcomings are dealt with effectively. The curriculum is enriched through visits, visitors and out-of-lesson activities. These enhance the experiences of all pupils well and stimulate the enjoyment of learning. Strengths in the curriculum are seen in the provision made to reduce bullying and racism and to raise pupils' awareness of customs and traditions which are different from their own. Good emphasis is placed upon the need to remain healthy and to make positive contributions to the life and work of the school.

In the Foundation Stage, planning is more effective and the curriculum is satisfactory. Despite poor outside facilities, improved outdoor provision for the Reception age children is supporting their good progress in each area of learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 4

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are inadequate overall because the procedures for supporting their learning are not effective enough to ensure that all make at least satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the encouragement pupils receive to make a positive contribution to the community are good. Health and safety procedures, including those for child protection, are well established and the school ensures that all pupils are safe. Parents are appreciative of

the school's work. The care and support given to pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are satisfactory. Those in the early stages of learning English and asylum seekers are given good support, with good use made of photographs to convey instructions. Teaching assistants have an active role in the care of the pupils, and are constantly alert to any distress or worry. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all that it does.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are inadequate. Although the leadership has a clear vision and knows the weaknesses in provision, the actions taken to raise standards have had limited effect. Weaknesses remain and not all staff implement agreed practice. One positive action has been the appointment of the Foundation Stage leader, who has made a considerable difference to provision, particularly in terms of outdoor learning. Governance is unsatisfactory. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is supportive of the school. However, the governors' role of 'critical friend' is underdeveloped and they are not always clear about the reasons for weaknesses in standards and achievement.

The checking of the school's work lacks rigour and the monitoring of teaching does not focus sufficiently on pupils' achievement. Key subject leaders are insufficiently involved in checking the rate of learning. They do not know well enough why things are as they are, or how to tackle weaknesses in provision. Analysis of data, including tracking and target setting procedures, is not rigorous enough to identify significant groups of pupils underachieving in Years 1 to 6. Standards have declined since the previous inspection and although the intake to the school has changed, this change has not been managed sufficiently well. The capacity to improve without support is inadequate.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	4	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited the school. We enjoyed talking with you about what you do.

What we liked most about your school:

- The youngest children make a good start in the Foundation Stage; they feel happy and safe and make good progress in their learning.
- You told us you like school and some of you enjoy being members of the school council.
- The adults in the school look after you and you know whom to turn to if you have a problem.
- The activities outside lessons are fun and you like going on visits to different places, particularly to the local sports stadium.
- You know which foods are healthy and why you should have regular exercise.

What we have asked the school to do to make it better:

- We think that you could learn more, if information about what you know is used more carefully to plan activities that make you all think. We also think you should know more about how you can make your work better.
- We have asked your headteacher to improve the way your progress is checked, so if any of you are not doing as well as you should, extra help can be given quickly.
- We have asked your headteacher, governors and subject leaders to check very carefully and regularly the way lessons are taught, so that you are all learning as well as you can.

We hope that you will do all you can to help your teachers when they are working hard to improve your school. More inspectors will be visiting the school to check that your learning has improved. Thank you again for helping us with our work.