



Crescent Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124013
LEA Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 281604
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mary Hamby HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pinewood Crescent
School category	Community		Meir
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 6HZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 318145
Number on roll	392	Fax number	01782 599 628
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Harp
Date of previous inspection	20 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr David Alston

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Crescent Primary School is reasonably new; it opened two years ago as a result of the merger of two schools. Thus, almost half of its pupils started their education at another school. The headteacher from one of the two schools was appointed as head of the new school and many of the existing staff transferred to the new building.

The school is larger than average and serves a very disadvantaged area in the south of Stoke-on-Trent. Almost all of its pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average, but only a very small proportion of them have a statutory statement of special educational need. Half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. A high proportion of children are cared for by lone parents. Seven children are looked after by the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be good and the inspection team agree. Parents and carers are right to be pleased with what the school provides. Standards on entry to the nursery are well below expected levels, and below average at start of Year 1. However, by the time the pupils leave in Year 6, standards are close to the national average.

The teaching is good and so the pupils achieve well but girls make better progress than boys, in reading and writing. The teachers motivate their pupils very well and consequently the pupils enjoy their learning. The staff care for the pupils and promote their personal development very effectively. The teachers are aware of the drive to improve speaking and listening, but some of their lessons still do not take sufficient account of this.

The pupils behave well and are considerate to each other. They know the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of what to do if they feel worried. There are effective systems in place to safeguard the pupils and to support and guide them; this is particularly important as some of the pupils experience troubled home circumstances.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is tireless in his efforts to secure the best for his school and leads the school with drive and integrity. The leadership team have worked together well to create a new school community that is harmonious, inclusive and committed to bringing about the best for its pupils. They have made a good start on self-evaluation and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They know that the assessment system is too complex and is not being used effectively enough. Development plans are clear and well focused, but there is not enough attention paid to evaluation, so it is not clear enough whether the plans were successful, or what the school learnt from the initiatives.

The governors support the school well and are becoming more adept at holding it to account for its actions. The school has responded very well to the issues arising from the previous inspections and is well placed to continue on its successful path. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to improve boys' achievement in English
- place more emphasis on the development of speaking and listening
- refine assessment systems
- ensure that initiatives are evaluated robustly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to nursery are well below expected levels, particularly in speaking, listening and early reading and writing skills. Standards are lower for boys than girls. Although all the children make good progress through the Foundation Stage (nursery

and reception), they enter Year 1 with skills which are lower than expected. The pupils make sound progress through Key Stage 1, but by the end of Year 2 standards are still below expected levels, particularly for boys.

The pupils achieve well through Key Stage 2 and all the pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress towards their challenging targets. By Year 6, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are close to the national average. However, standards in speaking and listening are still below expected levels. In other aspects of English, although girls make better progress than boys, there is evidence that the gap is closing because of the school's efforts to help boys improve their literacy skills.

The pupils make particularly good progress throughout the school in their personal development. When they start school, many of them do not concentrate well or persevere with their learning. However, as they move through the school they acquire good social skills and their dispositions to learning improve significantly. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and improving as a result of the effective work carried out by school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good; the school is rightly proud of this. The pupils behave well and are polite and helpful, for example, they eagerly open doors for each other or for adults. They enjoy coming to school and say that their school is a safe place where learning is fun. Most of them are keen participants in lessons, especially when the lesson is matched well to their needs. However, a few pupils, mostly boys, do not show the same zest for learning and are more reluctant to join in class discussion. This hampers their progress.

The pupils' moral and social development is good. This is because the staff are crystal clear about how they expect pupils to behave. Parents value what the school is doing; one parent said 'My daughter's self-esteem rocketed when she came to school.'

The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also good. The rich variety of experiences helps the pupils to appreciate cultural diversity through subjects like art and design and music. Staff understand the need to provide pupils with a spiritual dimension to their lives and do this well. They also encourage them to be resilient and to adopt physically and emotionally healthy lifestyles. Even the youngest children know about healthy eating, for example, a 5-year-old told the inspector to eat his carrots!

The older pupils take on responsibilities, for example, playground leaders who help children to play harmoniously and enjoy their recreation times. Other pupils have been part of a 'Stop Bullying' group and successfully worked as role models and mediators. The pupils enjoy their responsibilities enormously and feel a strong sense of pride and belonging. The School Council takes an active role in making decisions, for example, the purchase of playground equipment. Recently, the whole school took part in a Business Enterprise Week which helped pupils to learn important life skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good, with some outstanding aspects. The staff work together very well and have very effective systems in place to observe and assess children. They use this information very well to target their teaching to particular groups and plan a rich range of learning activities to motivate them. Although some specific areas, such as the 'Talk Tent', are designed to promote speaking and listening, some opportunities are missed to develop these skills.

In the rest of the school, the teaching is good and the pupils achieve well. The staff enjoy good relationships with the pupils and listen to them attentively. Parents are pleased with the teaching. They recorded comments such as 'delighted,' 'excellent progress,' 'teachers listen,' and 'no favouritism' which show their satisfaction.

The teachers have good subject knowledge and the school makes effective use of specialists within the school to enhance learning. Very good support is given by teaching assistants who are dedicated and enthusiastic, but sometimes their expertise is not used as effectively as it could be during whole class time. Teachers manage behaviour well and emphasise the behaviour that they want to promote, such as 'good sitting'.

Assessment from Year 1 to Year 6 is satisfactory. The teachers identify the standards that their pupils have reached and they record this information diligently. However, they do not always use this knowledge well enough to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Some of the marking and feedback during lessons is excellent, but in other instances it is not linked clearly enough to the needs of the pupils. Many pupils know their learning targets and are keen to achieve them. Targets in individual education plans are specific, but are not always taken fully into account when planning lessons.

The staff are extremely skilled in helping the pupils to consolidate their learning in a variety of ways, and have recently put increased emphasis on speaking and listening in lessons. For example, in Year 6, pupils regularly discuss questions or tasks with a partner. However, this is not consistent throughout the school and there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to pose questions or to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum. It is broad and balanced and is enriched by a wide range of activities which enhance the pupils' learning. In the Foundation Stage, there are good opportunities for the children to learn through play, and the outside area is used particularly well to extend and enrich their learning.

The school is creative in making links in learning so that basic skills are reinforced across the curriculum, for example, when a history topic about World War 2 was studied, the pupils also read fiction of the same period. The curriculum for personal development

is good. The school is responsive to local needs and so gives high priority to helping pupils stay healthy and safe, and to enjoy and achieve in their learning. Opportunities are provided for more able pupils in 'master classes' in drama and information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Issues regarding bullying or discrimination are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and cared for; one said 'you always have a teacher or a friend to help you,' which sums up how others feel. The pupils that need extra help are supported well, and the school works closely with other professionals to secure the best advice.

In the Foundation Stage, the children are carefully introduced to the routines of school life. The welcoming environment helps them settle in so that they can quickly start learning. In Year 6, there is a sensible programme to help the pupils prepare for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, governors and staff have worked very well together to merge two schools into a harmonious and vibrant learning community where equality of opportunity is promoted and every child matters. The headteacher leads the school skilfully, with vision and purpose. He understands the need to give his colleagues opportunities for career development and job satisfaction by giving them leadership roles. This is starting to have a clear impact on whole school improvement. The teamwork approach is very effective and is helping the school to build on its existing strengths and identify areas for development. Systems for monitoring the performance of staff are of high quality. The school values the opinions of parents, who feel that the school listens to their views and acts quickly in response to any queries they have. The pupils are also consulted well and have started to become much more involved in the assessment of their own work. School systems for assessment are kept up to date diligently and are of good quality. However, some of the information is not used as effectively as it could be to track pupils' progress.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and, together with the school leadership team, is well placed to take the school forward. The school has a clear agenda for further development, but strategies for evaluation are not identified with sufficient precision at the planning stage.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

I am writing to thank you all for your help when we inspected your school and to tell you what we found out. We enjoyed listening to your views and agree that you have a good school.

The special features that we will remember about your school are:

the interesting things that your teachers plan for you to learn which help you to make good progress

how you behave well and use your manners

how well you grow in confidence as you get older

the way your teachers care for you and keep you safe

the lovely environment that your teachers provide for you and the way that they make learning fun

the way that everyone works together to help you succeed

that your parents are welcomed into the school and their views are valued

the easy access you have to expert advice if you need it

that your headteacher is very proud of every single one of you; he works very hard to make sure that you have every opportunity to do your best.

We have asked the teachers and governors to continue their good work to make the school even better and have suggested that:

they give you more opportunities to develop your speaking and listening skills

they make sure that the boys work as hard as the girls in English lessons

they make better use of the information that they collect about how well you are doing and how well the school is improving.

Keep trying as hard as you can and enjoy the rest of the term.