

Arden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106100
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	287415
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	428
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mr J Murray
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002
School address	Osborne Street Bredbury Stockport Cheshire SK6 2EX
Telephone number	0161 4302675
Fax number	0161 4304537

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Inspection number	287415

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average two-form entry school serves a mixed area with pupils coming from a range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is similar to that in most schools, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British background with only a small number from minority ethnic groups. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has been awarded the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, the Active Sportsmark, the silver National Eco award, and has Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. There are some outstanding features. Parents rate the school highly and appreciate the outstanding level of care taken of their children, saying they are always happy to go to school. Comments such as 'Arden is an excellent school, where the children seem to enjoy every minute' typify the views of many parents. Pupils' outstanding personal development is a very positive factor in the good progress they make in their learning. Pupils clearly thoroughly enjoy school, are enthusiastic in lessons and have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy very positive relationships with teachers and work hard to please them. Their behaviour is excellent. They show increasing maturity as they go through the school, take on a range of responsibilities very enthusiastically and are pleased that their views are taken into account through the work of the school council. A climate exists in which pupils are happy and know how to stay safe and healthy. The many opportunities given to them to work together in pairs and teams develops their personal qualities effectively and the attention given to the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare them well for their future schooling.

Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and their teachers help them to learn. This is reflected by the way that pupils strive to please their teachers and is instrumental in ensuring that they make good progress. Many children join the school with limited social and communication skills. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that they make a good start from well below average starting points. Although the children make good progress they do not reach the standards expected of them by the time they start Year 1. Throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils continue to make good progress because lively teaching stimulates them to want to learn. They work hard, take a pride in their work and present it well. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below national averages. Too few pupils achieve at the higher levels. By Year 6, standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Achievement is good throughout the school. The performance of the current pupils indicates that standards at Year 2 continue to be below average. However, provisional 2007 national test results for the Year 6 pupils indicate that the school's efforts to raise standards by carefully tracking their progress is having a positive impact, particularly in mathematics.

The outstanding headteacher, well supported by the very able deputy and senior leadership team, gives a strong educational direction to the school. This good leadership and management demonstrating clarity of purpose are a major factor in the good progress made by pupils. The staff are enthusiastic and hardworking and governors are supportive and committed. Together they all work hard to ensure that a strong emphasis is given to meeting the needs of all the pupils. This is indeed a school in which every child matters and that fact is highly appreciated by parents. School self-evaluation procedures are accurate and areas requiring development correctly identified. Finances are well managed and the relatively low level funds are spent carefully. The school consequently provides good value for money. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. In the Foundation Stage close attention is given to developing children's social skills, and routines are well organised so that children quickly acquire good learning habits. However, most do not reach the standards expected for their age in language and literacy and in mathematics by the time they enter Year 1. As a result of good teaching, pupils continue to make good progress in

Years 1 and 2 though difficulties they have in basic skills mean that standards in reading writing and mathematics are still below the national average at the end of Year 2. Too few pupils achieve at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupil progress continues and standards rise in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is consistently good and assessment procedures explain very clearly to pupils what they must do to improve. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards are rising overall. Those pupils with additional learning needs and the very few pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress relative to their needs and abilities, because they are supported w

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Attendance is good. Pupils say that teachers are friendly and make learning fun, and they respond by behaving extremely well. They develop very good work habits and take pride in presenting their work well. Pupils are confident when talking to visitors and show care and concern for others. Members of the school council are very pleased that their ideas are listened to and that a number of changes have resulted. The pupils' care and concern for others is reflected in the way they collect for charities. Pupils say they feel safe in school and would confidently go to an adult if they had any concerns. They have a very good awareness of healthy lifestyles and participate in a wide range of sporting activities and after-school clubs. Their positive attitudes to learning and good achievements in basic skills prepare them well for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned to meet the differing needs of pupils and move at a fast pace. Teachers explain tasks clearly and use questions well to ensure that pupils know what they have to do. The successful use of interactive whiteboards stimulates pupils and makes learning interesting for them. Opportunities to work together in pairs and groups successfully develops pupils' understanding. Pupils consequently are eager to do well: work hard and make good progress. Occasionally in Key Stage 1 however, the more able pupils are not stretched sufficiently in lessons so that on these occasions they do not do as well as they could. Teachers set pupils clear targets in literacy, assess pupils' work carefully and give them clear guidance for improvement when marking their work, but this practice is not extended well to other subjects. Effective use of teaching assistants ensures that good

quality support is given to those pupils with additional learning needs. Parents are very pleased with the teaching in the school and their children's achievements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with a rich range of learning experiences presented to the pupils. It meets the needs of the vast majority of learners well, but the more able pupils are not always suitably challenged in Key Stage 1. Close attention is given to the key skills of literacy and numeracy, but due emphasis is also given to the other subjects. The effective use of ICT enhances learning and pupils enjoy the developing emphasis placed on creativity. Specialist lessons in music, French, dance and a range of sports enrich their learning experiences. Educational visits, visitors and residential trips for Years 4 and 6 bring learning to life for the pupils and develop their skills through a wide range of different experiences. The school's achievement of the Healthy Schools award and Activemark is reflected in the pupils' awareness of the need for healthy lifestyles. An impressive programme of after-school activities makes a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's motto, 'Together we care', is clearly reflected in the way that it works with parents to ensure that the quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is excellent. Parents value this highly and say they find staff very approachable. Pupils say they are confident that there is someone they can turn to for support if they have any concerns. Child protection procedures are secure, and regular health and safety checks are carried out. The school works well with external agencies to provide support for pupils when this is required. Well organised and effective arrangements help children to settle into the Foundation Stage. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Academic guidance is very good. Pupils know how well they are doing because teachers' marking of their work gives them clear pointers for improvement. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that intervention can be planned effectively for any who may be in need of additional support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a determined and continual striving, by all leaders and managers, to improve the performance of the school so that pupils do well. As one teacher said, 'There is an atmosphere of not settling for what we've got.' Effective self-evaluation procedures take good account of the views of pupils and parents and accurately identify areas for development. As a result, the well organised school development plan focuses on the important areas needing development. Performance management is used effectively to support the development process. Highly effective systems ensure that new teachers are successfully inducted and quickly develop their effectiveness in class. Financial management is good and careful attention is given to ensuring that best value is gained from purchases. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive and well informed about the work of the school. They make a very good contribution in further improving the work of the school by working in close harmony with the school's leadership team.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Arden Primary School, Stockport SK6 2EX

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and getting your views of your school. Many of you said it was a good school and I agree.

I particularly liked the warm and friendly atmosphere and the way the staff take excellent care of you so that you feel safe and happy. They work hard to make learning interesting for you so you do well. I was very impressed by the wide range of activities that they plan for you and it was very clear that this helps you to really enjoy school. Many of you told me this, and how much you like your teachers. The way you work hard for your teachers is the main reason that you make good progress and achieve well. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school was excellent. I was pleased to see that you have a very good awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and how to keep fit and healthy. This was clearly evident when I talked to some of you at lunchtime.

There are many good features in your school, but I have asked the headteacher and staff to do one thing. I want them to help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to improve your reading, writing and mathematics. You can help them by continuing to work hard and doing your best. This will help to make Arden Primary an even better school.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I wish you all well in the future.