

Scholar Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111039
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	288835
Inspection date	5 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Pat Morgan
Headteacher	Mr Mollard
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Congleton Road Scholar Green Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST7 3HF
Telephone number	01782 782652
Fax number	01782 775001

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects; standards reached by pupils and the progress they make; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; pupils' personal development and

well-being and some aspects of care, guidance and support, the curriculum, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data, observations of lessons, discussion with staff, governors and pupils and from parents' questionnaires. Relevant documents held by the school, including pupils' work, were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in the self-evaluation were not justified. These have been included in the report where appropriate.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average village school located in the south of Cheshire. Almost all pupils who attend are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A smaller than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has recently gained the Inclusion Quality Mark. It has been awarded Healthy Schools status and has retained the Activemark for the past two years. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Scholar Green is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Their personal development is outstanding.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development thrives in the friendly and supportive atmosphere of the school. They show genuine concern and respect for others, for example, by helping each other with work, being playtime 'carers' or taking the initiative in charity fundraising events. Pupils' attendance is good. They enjoy school because they have a say in what happens. An excellent example of this is the way in which the school council canvassed pupils' views on 'how we learn best'. The outcomes of the survey resulted in teachers introducing more practical work in lessons. Pupils agree that lessons are fun. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually exemplary. The school council recently took a leading role in an anti-bullying campaign by organising a poster competition and gathering opinions.

Pupils are adamant that bullying is a thing of the past. Although they own up to occasional minor confrontations if their sense of justice is challenged, they all agree that adults are always on hand to help them reach amicable settlements. Pupils are fully aware of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Healthy lunch menu choices and snacks are established features of school life and pupils enjoy the very wide range of opportunities to be active. Nevertheless, pupils are not complacent and have laid down plans to start their own vegetable garden. Pupils are very keen to take on responsibilities whether routine daily duties or more representative roles such as recycling, road safety or school council work. Pupils had a say in the advertisement for their headteacher's appointment and council representatives took part in the interview process. Outstanding working links with pupils from other schools and with local businesses are further exceptional opportunities for pupils to develop the important life skills they will need to secure their future well-being.

Pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are above average. In the most recent national tests, standards in English at Key Stage 2 were well above the national average. They were above average in mathematics and average in science. Achievement and standards faltered in 2006 and were broadly average. This was the result of an unsettled period of teaching experienced by that cohort. English standards rallied in 2007 but mathematics did not show the same rate of improvement. However, this has now been resolved. Teaching has improved and is consistently good. Consequently, there is now good pace to learning throughout Key Stage 2 resulting in better achievement and improving standards. School assessments show that pupils in Years 5 and 6, whose attainment was low at the end of Year 2, are now on track to meet the challenging targets set for them. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average and have been exceptionally high in writing for the past two years. Currently, pupils make very good progress because of consistently good quality teaching and the effective use of assessment information to set targets. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with additional needs make good progress. Achievements are closely monitored through individual learning programmes. Their particular needs are clearly understood, and managed sensitively by staff.

There is good breadth to the curriculum which enables pupils to achieve well. French is a long established feature of the curriculum. Writing is promoted well across subjects and accounts for the quality and standards seen in literacy across the school. Computers are used well to develop pupils' independent learning skills. Personal, social, health education and citizenship

are provided for well. Pupils understand the potential hazards they may face outside of school and the importance of secure relationships. The quality and range of activities to enrich learning are outstanding. These include residential visits, day trips to galleries, historical sites and a soccer stadium. Visitors in school who promote sports and the Arts as well as after-school clubs add exceptional richness and enjoyment to pupils' learning.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher has quickly set the school on a clear path to improvement. His incisive evaluation of the school's needs has led to successful strategies which are having a positive impact on achievement and standards. The improved stability of teaching has enabled an outstanding whole-school approach to the tracking and monitoring of pupils' academic progress. Teachers check progress rigorously. Intervention is swift and targets are reviewed. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them because of the way information is shared through marking. As a result, progress has gathered pace and standards are rising. The deputy headteacher and other senior managers fulfil their roles effectively. They have clear areas of responsibility, support colleagues well, and through monitoring, contribute to the school's accurate self-evaluation of its work. Governors have redefined the roles of committees and now provide increased challenge and support for the school. They review the school improvement plan regularly to evaluate progress. The budget is managed carefully to ensure the best possible staffing ratio is maintained and to secure good value for money. The headteacher has won the confidence of the whole-school community. Parents and children agree overwhelmingly that children are looked after well in school. Safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure this is so. The school works very effectively with outside providers such as schools, colleges and businesses to boost pupils' learning in areas of sport, science and performing arts. Although significant improvements have taken place and leaders are already beginning to tackle other areas for improvement, it is too early to gauge the full impact of leadership on pupils' achievement and standards. There is good capacity for the school to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Their skills are broadly in line with expectations for their age when they start in Reception class. They make good progress because they are taught well. By the end of Reception all children work comfortably within their expected abilities and some exceed expectations. Teachers promote personal, social and emotional development well so children behave well and share activities harmoniously. They show good levels of confidence and independence when they choose activities for themselves. The teaching of phonics is good. Children quickly learn to link letters and sounds and attempt to spell words. This means they approach writing with confidence. Activities for indoors are planned well but outdoor learning is restricted because of the limitations of the outdoor area. Assessment of children's progress is good and enables teachers to plan step by step learning. All children have targets which are shared with parents. Relationships with parents are very positive. An induction day allows parents to meet teachers and each other and sample for themselves the good provision available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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 Scholar Green Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, Cheshire,
ST7 3HF

I am sure you will remember that I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome which made my visit so pleasant. I enjoyed talking to you about your work. I enjoyed my visit to Reception class where I was given a ticket and a map and shown around your 'zoo'.

You have a good school and there are outstanding things about it also. Your behaviour, politeness and manners are excellent, and I am very impressed with the way your school council works to make your school better for everyone. No wonder you are all so fit and healthy after all the exercise you take and those extremely healthy school lunches!

Your teachers make lessons fun and teach you well. That's why your standards are improving. The way your teachers check your progress and make sure you reach your targets is excellent. Your headteacher has introduced some good ideas to improve things and knows what needs to be done next to make your school even better. One of the main things to do is to give Reception children a better outside area where they can enjoy their learning even more.