



Pikemere Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111042
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288838
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Jeffery Plumb

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pikemere Road
School category	Community		Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent
Age range of pupils	4–11		Staffordshire ST7 2SW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 874237
Number on roll (school)	207	Fax number	01270 883592
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Steve Bristow
		Headteacher	Mr Gareth Elswood
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pikemere Primary School is of average size. It is a popular school with an increasing number of pupils being admitted from outside the community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. So too is the number of pupils eligible for a free school meal. There are few minority ethnic pupils and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school has an Artsmark Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

In this outstanding school learning is fun and challenging for all pupils. Inspectors judge the school has been too modest in its overall evaluation of its performance. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress results in action taken to raise achievement for every pupil. This pays dividends in raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

All pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the effective quality of teaching. Standards by Year 6 have been consistently above the national average in recent years. In 2006 the national test results for 11-year-olds improved significantly on the previous year because of the successful strategies put in place to drive up standards in writing and mathematics. Achievement is good in art and standards are high in this subject. Teaching provides good challenge for all pupils and targets support well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides good value for money.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their enjoyment of learning is reflected in their well above average attendance. Through an effective enterprise project, pupils' work-related skills are developed exceptionally well. Pupils say, 'Our views are heard and acted upon.' They consider they are involved in decisions made to improve the quality of their education. Many opportunities are provided to promote pupils' fitness and they are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. Pupils feel safe. They are eager to be good citizens and support those in the world less fortunate than themselves. Their understanding of cultural diversity is very mature for their age. Outstanding care is the magical ingredient in this successful school. Pupils feel valued and are enthusiastic to achieve their very best.

An innovative curriculum enables pupils to think critically and develop good problem-solving skills. The curriculum for children under five is well planned, but limited resources and insufficient outdoor play space limits what can be provided for them. The senior leadership team work very effectively together. They evaluate pupils' performance meticulously and use their findings from this exercise to inform planning to drive up standards. They never lose sight of what is best for the pupils. Unceasingly, they work with a commitment towards building the best quality of education for every pupil. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by parents and aptly summed up by the pupils who say, 'It's a great all rounder school that consults with the children, a place where we all learn together.' Capacity for improvement is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the range of resources and the outdoor provision for children under five to increase their learning opportunities and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is in line with that expected nationally for children of that age. They make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 6 standards are above the national average in English and science, and well above in mathematics. This is better than the national test results for 11-year-olds in 2005 and reflects the success of the actions taken subsequently by the school to drive up standards in writing and mathematics. Throughout the school pupils achieve high standards in art because the teaching of this subject is creative and challenging. More able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because their personalised learning programmes stretch them effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school as evidenced by their well above average attendance. Overwhelmingly, they have positive attitudes to learning. They say, 'Our learning is fun and challenging'. Behaviour is good. Rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly. Pupils' health and fitness are promoted well. Pupils consider they are involved in decision-making about their education through a vibrant school council. An effective link with the local high school engages pupils in an exciting enterprise project. It develops their work-related skills very well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Typically, teaching is challenging, stimulating and makes learning fun. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. A learning environment is created which enables pupils to have the confidence to try new methods to solve problems. Effective planning and good marking enables teachers to set pupils clear targets to improve their work. Consequently, pupils make good progress. Children under five are taught well, but learning opportunities are constrained by the small size of the outdoor play area.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is innovative and creative. Meticulous planning ensures that pupils' basic skills are developed well through interesting themes which promote excellence in learning. It meets the needs of all pupils. Successful ingredients include the individual learning programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the

provision for pupils who are gifted and talented. These programmes make a valuable contribution to pupils' good achievement. The curriculum for children under five is planned well, but there are not enough resources to support it. Excellent use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. After-school clubs successfully encourage pupils to adopt a healthy

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding quality of care lies at the heart of this successful school. Teachers set challenging targets for every pupil. They track their progress rigorously and intervene quickly to support any who are falling behind in their work. Excellent use is made of external agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is greatly appreciated by parents. Pupils say, 'We feel safe and there is a trusted adult we can talk to about our problems'. Essential risk assessments are conducted thoroughly. Child protection procedures are robust. All adults in school are checked for their suitability to work with children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that all pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life. Pupils say, 'School is concerned in developing us as rounded children'. All staff share the acting headteacher's vision and commitment to raise achievement and provide the best quality of care possible for all pupils. There are good systems in place for checking how well the school is performing. Actions taken have raised achievement for pupils. Governors are involved as partners with the leadership team in driving up standards and creating a school where every child feels valued and achieves well. There is a clear plan to invest further in the provision for children under five, but it is at too early a stage of implementation to evaluate its effectiveness. Given the success of other plans in raising achievement it bodes well for the future.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	1
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	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	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?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
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	1
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

Thank you for the way in which you welcomed us as guests to your school. It was a joy to talk with you and discover the enthusiasm you have for learning.

What we judge to be good about your school

- The fact that you make good progress and reach standards by Year 6 above the national average in English and science, and well above in mathematics because of the consistently good teaching you receive.
- The commitment the school has to keep you fit, healthy and safe.
- The fact that your learning is fun, exciting and challenging because your curriculum is a creative one.
- The way in which you are involved in making decisions about your school.
- The outstanding care and support you receive.
- The outstanding leadership provided by your acting headteacher and all of your teachers.

What we have asked your school to do now

- To improve resources and the outdoor play area for children under five.

Please keep your thirst for learning alive and continue to work as hard as you can so that you all achieve the very best you are capable of.