

Sneyd Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123988
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	292851
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Owen
Headteacher	Rosina Lee
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Sneyd Street Burslem Stoke-on-Trent ST6 2NS
Telephone number	01782 234460
Fax number	01782 283025

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area of some social deprivation. The majority of pupils are White British, although nine other ethnic backgrounds are represented. There are a small proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. Children's attainment on entry to the school in the Foundation Stage (Nursery) mainly matches that expected for their age. Extended day-care facilities, both during term-time and holiday-time, are offered by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. There are notable strengths in pupils' personal development and in their pastoral care. Parents are positive about the care their children receive. As one parent typically said, 'The staff will always listen if children have a concern'. The learning mentor and external agencies provide good support for those who may be vulnerable. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are polite and friendly and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are eager to help others through fund-raising, singing at local events, being playground leaders or as members of the school council. The school council, however, does not provide a forum that ensures that all pupils' views are known to the leadership of the school.

The leadership was unaware that a significant number of pupils have satisfactory rather than good attitudes towards school. Pupils think that there is too much time spent on literacy and numeracy and they do not have enough time to learn in other subjects. The curriculum, particularly for Year 6 pupils, is inadequate. Pupils do not have sufficient learning opportunities in history, geography and information and communication technology (ICT), for example. Even so, pupils behave well and try hard to please their teachers. A good emphasis on personal, social and health education, however, ensures pupils understand how to stay safe and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, it is better in some parts of the school than in others. In the best lessons, there is a lively pace and assessment is used carefully to plan new learning. But, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to do, and pupils are too often given mundane copying activities. Marking in English and mathematics is often helpful but the guidance given in other subjects is not as clear. Support, care and guidance are satisfactory.

By Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, and achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and most are working within the goals expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although activities are often too adult-directed, and opportunities for learning outdoors are not maximised. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning English receive good support and make good progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement, and satisfactory procedures for checking teaching and learning are in place. These have been effective in identifying weaknesses in mathematics provision, which has resulted in improved standards. However, these systems have not had full impact because weaknesses in the breadth and balance of the curriculum and low expectations of some teachers remain. Self-evaluation, although satisfactory, does not provide an accurate picture of what provision is really like for pupils in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop an interesting and imaginative curriculum that engages the interest of pupils and ensures they study in sufficient depth all subjects of the National Curriculum.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do.

- Ensure monitoring and evaluation procedures are much sharper in identifying a more accurate picture of what is happening in the school.
- Maximise outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage, and ensure there is an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and, by the time they enter Year 1, most are working within the goals expected for their age. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average and progress is satisfactory. Responding to the lower than usual results in the 2006 end-of-key-stage National Curriculum tests, the school has worked hard to raise standards, with some success. Standards in mathematics have improved. More pupils are now working at the levels expected for their age than in the past. However, improved standards have been a result of a narrowing of the curriculum and, in Year 6 in particular, too much coaching for the tests. This has resulted in pupils not enjoying their education as they should. Because of good targeted support, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, as do those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy school and they work together well. Their independent learning skills are insufficiently developed by staff because tasks are often too adult-directed. In Years 1 to 6, pupils are friendly and polite and openly discuss their ideas with visitors. They emphasise that bullying is rare and confidently say it is dealt with successfully whenever it does occur. Although some pupils find lessons uninteresting, they try very hard to please their teachers by working hard and behaving well. Pupils' enjoyment of school is satisfactory. They wish there was more to do at break-times and many think they spend too much time on literacy and numeracy and not enough time on other subjects such as ICT, history and geography. Attendance is only satisfactory as, despite the school's efforts, a minority of parents do not send their children to school as regularly as they should. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility. The school council meets regularly but as yet it does not effectively convey pupils' views to the adults in the school. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is good. They know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A common strength in teaching throughout the school is good relationships. Pupils like their teachers and want to learn. However, some teachers have low expectations of what pupils are able to do and the pace of learning is too slow. When older pupils were asked if they did experiments in science, some said 'Yes', whilst others said 'No'. Teaching in the Foundation Stage class is satisfactory, but does not give enough attention to the ways children learn through

experiment and play. There are examples of good teaching for others to learn from. In some classes, there is a lively pace, a clear understanding of expected outcomes and good checking of what pupils are learning and remembering so that subsequent lessons can build on this. Teaching assistants are deployed well to provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is not lively or interesting enough. In the Foundation Stage, the outdoor area is not used well enough to promote learning. In the drive to improve standards, there has been an overemphasis on literacy and numeracy and, in Year 6 in particular, the curriculum is far too narrow. As one pupil typically said, 'Since Christmas, all we have done is practice for 'Sats'! Could you please get someone in, to do some activities with us?' Because of this, pupils display a lack of enthusiasm for their lessons. They make too few visits to places of educational interest, so they have limited first-hand experience to build on and this hampers their progress. The satisfactory range of activities and clubs outside lesson-times adds interest and enjoyment for those who take part. Visitors also add interest, resulting in some very good art and design work. Also, the curriculum covers health and safety issues well, so pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and avoid unnecessary risks.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Pupils say they feel safe and know there are grown-ups they can talk to if upset or worried. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning English benefit from good personal support. This enables them to play a full part in lessons and make good progress. Good use is made of the learning mentor and external agencies to help vulnerable pupils. All procedures for safeguarding pupils, including child protection, are securely in place.

Systems to check pupils' progress are satisfactory. Marking in English and mathematics is often helpful but it is not as strong in other subjects. Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy and are proud when these are achieved. Parents say they are kept well informed about their children's progress towards their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision and a determination to improve provision in the school. A range of procedures for uncovering the school's strengths and weaknesses have been established. Subject leaders follow a satisfactory monitoring timetable to analyse strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. This has been successful in raising standards, particularly in mathematics. This, alongside satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, checking systems have not been sufficiently rigorous in uncovering some areas of significant weakness, for example in the balance and breadth of the curriculum. So far, there has not been enough focus on the evaluation of the impact of the work to bring about improvement. Governors are very supportive and come

into school regularly. However, they do not know exactly what is happening and therefore their role of challenge is only satisfactory.

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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
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

26 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Sneyd Green Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 2NS

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and we were impressed when you told us exactly how you feel. We know your headteacher was very pleased that you were strong enough to say what you really think. We agree with you when you said that your school is satisfactory, with some good parts.

We were pleased to see that the youngest children settle quickly in school and are happy. However, we think that they should have more chances to choose what and how they are going to learn. Also, we think the new outdoor area could be used in a much better way. You are all really polite and friendly and we were very impressed by the way you smiled at us as we visited different parts of the school. We were very pleased to hear you feel safe in school and that adults will listen to you if you are worried about anything. It was good to know that you understand the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise.

By the time you leave in Year 6, most of you reach standards that are similar to those in other schools and you make satisfactory progress. However, the progress you make varies because teaching is not always as good in each classroom. We agree with you when you said there is too much time spent on literacy and numeracy and lessons are not exciting enough. So we have asked your headteacher to look at the way the curriculum is organised to make it more interesting and to try and help teachers to be more imaginative in the way they expect you to learn. We have also asked teachers to expect more of you and not to ask you to spend time copying from books or worksheets. In science, for example, we think you should all be doing lots of experiments and investigations.

We have asked your headteacher to keep a careful check on what is happening in the school and ensure that you are all have an exciting curriculum so you think that school is a good and interesting place to be!

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness Lead Inspector