



Carmountside Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123991
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 292853
Inspection date 15 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Woodhead Road
School category	Foundation		Abbey Hulton
Age range of pupils	3-11		Stoke-on-Trent ST2 8DJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 234676
Number on roll (school)	172	Fax number	01782 236411
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Robert Fotheringham
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, serving an estate of mostly social housing towards the edge of the city. A much higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free schools meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. All pupils are of White British heritage.

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. As parents say, 'Children are well educated by kind, considerate and dedicated teachers'. The key to the success of the school is the ambition of the headteacher to achieve the best for the pupils. This vision is shared by the whole staff team and the continual drive to improve is an example of the good leadership and management. This drive has resulted in rising standards and pupils' good progress through the school. For instance, writing was analysed as a weakness a couple of years ago. The work done has resulted in raised standards in writing in Year 2, which are now feeding up through the school. Pupils are achieving well and reaching above average standards by the time they leave. The progress that they make accelerates as they go through the school. Teaching and the curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes are satisfactory and children are making sound progress in these classes. The school rightly focuses on their personal and social development at this stage and children make good progress in these areas of their learning. However, they do not enjoy the full range of opportunities and experiences that children of this age need for other areas of their curriculum. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and it is outstanding in Years 3 to 6. In each of the last four years, the school has been in the top 5% of all schools for the progress made in Years 3 to 6. There are two major reasons for this good progress. The first, and most important, is the good quality of teaching and learning. Lessons are often lively and pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and learning. The following was typical of comments made by pupils, 'When teachers try to learn you things, they do it in a fun way'. The other major factor is the good curriculum, which has been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. This is resulting in pupils' good personal development. Pupils work hard and behave well in lessons. The way that they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning is impressive, with even quite young pupils choosing activities sensibly and getting on with their work without fuss. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, where there were too few opportunities for pupils' independent learning. Pupils have good awareness of healthy and safe practices. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. There are good opportunities for them to take responsibility and they are keen to support projects overseas, but there is little involvement in the local community. The good development of basic skills and independence is preparing pupils well for their future life. Academic support and guidance is good, with teachers keeping records of steps in learning and pupils knowing clearly how to improve their work. However, records of pupils' progress in the longer term are not kept formally and it is therefore difficult for managers to keep a check on this progress and identify pupils who might be underachieving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes so that they enjoy the full range of opportunities and experiences appropriate for children of their age.

- Put in place systems for recording pupils' progress so that it can be measured more accurately and weaknesses in progress more readily identified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well and reach above average standards by the time they leave. Children start in the Nursery with low levels of skills and knowledge, particularly in their language development. They make satisfactory rather than good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because they do not have enough opportunities to extend their skills in areas such as their mathematical and physical development. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good, although standards are still below average by the end of Year 2. The exceptional progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 enables them to attain standards that are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties are making good progress as there are well-planned programmes of work and good levels of support for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are learning and putting into practice a clear moral and social code and the school is a happy and friendly place. There are a number of good examples of older pupils taking care of, and helping, younger ones, with their reading, for instance. Pupils are very confident that adults in the school will sort out any problems with relationships or behaviour and they play with due regard for others. Pupils' spiritual awareness is developed satisfactorily through assemblies and good opportunities in the curriculum to experience awe and wonder. Since the last inspection, pupils' awareness of other cultures has improved well, as the school has forged a number of overseas links. However, pupils still do not fully appreciate the multi-cultural nature of our own society. Pupils know how to stay healthy, although lunch boxes often contain unhealthy snacks. Pupils take full advantage of opportunities to keep fit and take lots of exercise. Despite the school's best efforts, rates of attendance are at the bottom end of the average range.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are typified by a calm, orderly working environment. In this atmosphere, pupils work hard and learn well. There are really good relationships between pupils and teachers and these are further factors in pupils wanting to do well. Lessons are often lively and involving. Pupils enjoy all the opportunities to participate and they regard many of the activities as being 'fun'. The major reason for the accelerated progress and learning in Years 3 to 6 is the quality of feedback that pupils receive on their work.

They are expected to assess how well they have done themselves and teachers then give them clear guidance on how they can improve. In some lessons, particularly for the younger children, there are times when too long is spent on one activity or sitting listening. This leads to a lack of pace in pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been planned well to meet the needs of the pupils in the school. It is very relevant for them and they find it interesting and enjoyable. The exception is the curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. In these classes, there is an insufficient range of activities and they are not sufficiently targeted at raising children's achievement. For example, there is no role-play area permanently set up in each class. Pupils particularly enjoy the good range of visitors that enrich their experiences. Visits are more limited, although they are worthwhile and stimulating, such as the Japanese drumming workshop that pupils attended. Good use of information and communication technology is planned into the curriculum, which further interests pupils. There is a good range of sporting extra-curricular activities and pupils enjoy the success that the teams achieve.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The systems for pastoral care are very thorough, as are those for child protection. Pupils are looked after very well and say that they feel safe and secure. This is particularly the case with pupils who have social needs. The school has employed a very effective team of support staff and there are good links with educational professionals. This ensures that these needs are met well and that these pupils are able to fit in and enjoy all that the school has to offer. Teachers make careful assessments of what pupils have learnt and use these well to set them targets for the next steps in their learning. However, there are no clear annual records kept of pupils' progress. This makes it difficult for managers to see the effectiveness of strategies put in place to improve achievement and for teachers to judge the effectiveness of their teaching.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders have a very clear vision for the school. Teamwork is at the heart of this vision and its success is seen in improving pupils' achievement. All staff work very well together to ensure that they are providing the best they can for the pupils. There are good systems of self-evaluation, and parents and pupils are involved in this process well. As parents say, 'We feel that our opinion is valued'. However, governors are not so involved. The school finds it difficult to recruit governors and there are a number of vacancies at present. Because of this, governors are not sufficiently involved in checking on the effectiveness of the school. Within school, there is a good range of

focused monitoring of teaching and learning, but areas for development are not recorded rigorously enough. Managers are therefore unable to check on whether weaknesses have been addressed. Although there are good links with educational professionals and other organisations, there are fewer links with other schools with pupils carrying out joint projects, for example. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. For example, the contribution of senior staff to managing the school and pupils' independent learning skills are much improved. Bearing this in mind, alongside the very obvious commitment to improvement, the school is well placed to continue to move forward.

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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?	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	3
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?	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	2
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	2
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?	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.

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	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

- Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. I very much enjoyed talking to so many of you and seeing how hard you work. I was particularly impressed with the way that you choose activities in lessons and get on with your work sensibly. Many of you told me how proud you are of your school. You are right to be proud as it is a good school. These are the best things about your school:
- you make good progress through the school and excellent progress in Years 3 to 6
- your headteacher and all staff know clearly how they can improve the school and they are working hard to do this
- your lessons are interesting and often fun and you are therefore learning well
- all adults take care of you very well, particularly if you have problems that need sorting out
- you work hard, behave well and look after each other well
- the work planned for you is good and you enjoy a good number of visits and sporting activities. This is what I have suggested might be improved:
- the curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes, although satisfactory, is not as good as it should be
- your progress over a long period is not recorded so that teachers can keep a better check on how well you are doing. Keep up the good work, and best wishes.