

Forest Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123997
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	292855
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Mackie
Headteacher	Jan Baggaley
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002
School address	Woodall Street Off Waterloo Street Hanley Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5ED
Telephone number	01782 234979
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has been through a period of considerable change following its amalgamation with another primary school in September 2005 when it became a new school. It is a larger than average school. Two-thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with the majority being of Pakistani origin. Many pupils who start school are at the very early stages of learning English. Most children enter the school with skills and experiences that are well below the levels expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Forest Park is a satisfactory school. The school's happy and harmonious atmosphere significantly contributes to pupils' good personal development. Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and secure and talk enthusiastically about the many opportunities they have to take responsibility. Pupils are very polite and behaviour is good, both inside lessons and around the school. Attendance has markedly risen over the last year and is now average. This is the result of the rigorous checking of absence and effective rewards and sanctions.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress from a low starting point and attain standards that are below average in English and mathematics. This is because pupils' written work shows a limited breadth of vocabulary and many find writing longer pieces of work difficult. In mathematics, pupils' skills at using their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems are underdeveloped. Pupils make good progress in science to reach average standards. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress but few reach the levels expected of them by the end of the Reception class due to their very low starting points.

Teaching is satisfactory because there are inconsistencies in the level of challenge in lessons as teachers do not always plan work to match the different needs of pupils. Although there is some good teaching, this is not as widespread as it needs to be. Teachers manage lessons well, work is generally interesting and relationships are good. As a result pupils are keen to learn.

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents are very pleased with the pastoral care the school provides. One parent said, 'The school has been most understanding of my child's needs and has gone out of its way to help and support him'. The staff provide sensitive care and support for all pupils and this contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school and their feeling safe. The guidance given to pupils on improving their work is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory because plans to improve aspects of both writing and mathematics are not fully effective. It supports aspects of pupils' personal development well, for example, developing a healthy lifestyle through swimming and health education lessons. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since amalgamation, pupil numbers have risen and school life has been disrupted by extensive building work. The school has come through this difficult period of change well, during which the headteacher has provided clear leadership enthusiastically supported by dedicated staff. The school checks its performance regularly and has a satisfactory picture of its strengths and areas for improvement. While there have been notable gains in such areas as attendance, improvements in achievement and standards are not as marked. This is because the school does not give this aspect of its work the highest priority in its development planning. The successful amalgamation and the recent record of improvement show the school is satisfactorily placed to make further improvements. Governance is good. Governors provide the school with good support and challenge it over its performance.

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.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' standards in writing by giving greater emphasis to broadening of vocabulary and writing at length.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to practise their problem solving skills in mathematics.

- Ensure teachers' planning matches the needs of different pupils so that work is consistently challenging.
- To raise standards, ensure that improving achievement is the priority of the school's development planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Year 6 are below average and this represents satisfactory achievement given that pupils start school from a very low baseline. Boys' standards have recently improved and both girls and boys make similar, satisfactory progress. Standards have risen a little in Years 1 and 2 over the past year but remain below average. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. Pupils at the early stages of learning English also make satisfactory progress and most make good gains in acquiring language skills. Pupils of Pakistani heritage make good progress because their families are very effective in their support of homework and other help offered by the school. Pupils of other ethnic minority heritage make satisfactory progress.

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes especially in their language skills. However few reach the expected standards by the time they start Year 1 because of their very low starting point.

Standards in writing are below average because pupils do not use a wide range of vocabulary to develop their ideas and they find writing longer pieces of work, such as stories and plays, difficult. Their use and application of mathematical knowledge to solve problems and answer longer questions is weak. Average standards and good progress in science are the result of many good opportunities for pupils to undertake research and experiments in practical lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and this is the basis of their good behaviour. In the Nursery and Reception classes and by the time they start Year 1 children play together well and readily share items. Occasionally pupils get restless in class and chatter when the work they are given is not challenging enough. Pupils value each other and the world around them. They have a good commitment to living harmoniously in a multicultural community and enjoy sharing each other's culture and festivals.

Pupils feel very safe and report that there is no bullying. They feel very well cared for and are confident that they can turn to an adult if they have a problem, knowing their worries will be quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school and talk enthusiastically about their many interesting lessons, their visits to places of interest and the good playground facilities. Pupils understand the need to keep healthy and strive to keep fit through taking regular exercise. They try to maintain a balanced diet too, especially at school, but admit to occasional lapses! Pupils readily accept responsibility as members of the school council, playground leaders, charity organisers and house captains. Many good opportunities to manage money, for example, in their charity work and the enterprising 'fruit shop', help support the development of basic skills and ensure that pupils' preparation for their future education is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While there is some good teaching, too much is satisfactory with inconsistencies in practice. Teachers do not always plan activities that are suitably matched to pupils' ability and this means that some pupils find the work either too easy or too difficult. Occasionally teachers provide too many worksheets that require short answers, so pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to expand their vocabulary and write in paragraphs. Teaching and learning are good in the Nursery and Reception classes because teachers are very knowledgeable about the needs of young children. Teachers provide children with choices that develop their independence well and plan lively activities that quickly develop their language skills.

Well qualified teachers establish good relationships and manage behaviour well and as a result pupils are generally attentive and apply themselves to their tasks. Throughout the school, teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to engage pupils. Teacher's use of paired pupil discussion is helping to improve pupils' understanding of their work. Throughout the school teaching assistants help promote pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and those who are learning to speak and use English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has introduced more opportunities for practical work in mathematics and is placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' language skills but these strategies are not yet resolving the weaknesses in writing and mathematics. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest such as museums, mosques and other places of worship but there are too few clubs on offer, which restricts opportunities for pupils to extend their interests and aspirations. The curriculum supports aspects of pupils' personal development well. For example, pupils regularly discuss risk and ways of keeping safe. Specialist teaching supports pupils' interest in music well and many pupils are learning to play musical instruments.

The interesting and lively nursery and reception curriculum significantly contributes to children's enjoyment and good progress. Its focus on developing language skills is particularly effective. One of the two outdoor areas, the covered section, is well used to develop children's independence. The 'open' outdoor area is underused and children's physical skills are not as well developed as they should be.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a very safe and caring haven for all pupils and especially for vulnerable pupils and those who face difficulties outside school. As a result pupils are keen to come to school. Children settle quickly in the Nursery and their parents say they are very pleased with the discussions they have with staff. Pupils with disabilities receive good, sensitive support from well trained adults. Their needs are regularly reviewed to ensure they receive appropriate help so that they can take full part in lessons. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are also well provided for by specialist staff. The school has many strong links with external agencies that support pupils' education well. For example, the improvement in attendance is helped by

very effective collaboration with the Education Welfare Officer. Child protection measures and health and safety arrangements are very secure.

Pupils have recently been set challenging targets to reach and their progress towards them is regularly checked. There is a good range of measures, for example revision and booster classes, to help those whose progress slows. These arrangements are all relatively new and, while they have promise, they are having only a satisfactory impact at present.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has been through a challenging period and during this time the headteacher has successfully engendered a strong sense of common purpose amongst staff with a clear focus on providing a caring school in which pupils' personal development thrives. However, leadership and management are satisfactory as raising pupils' achievement and standards is not the highest priority in development planning and the evaluation of the quality of teaching does not yet focus enough on learning. Subject leaders manage their resources well but their role in analysing data to identify areas for academic improvement is not sufficiently developed.

The systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has improved teachers' behaviour management and the use of assessment in lesson planning, which are now beginning to raise standards in some classes. The school recognised that computer facilities were inadequate and has invested in new machines, which have significantly broadened pupils' experience in information and communication technology (ICT).

Governors provide good support for the school and carry out their duties well. They monitor the work of the school conscientiously and challenge its results. They have correctly identified the need to focus the school's attention more sharply on achievement and standards.

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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	2
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	NA

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	3

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	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?	3
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?	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	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

26 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Forest Park Primary School, Woodall Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5ED

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were very polite and you made us feel most welcome. We enjoyed the discussions we had with you about the work and activities you do at school. You are clearly very proud of the school's happy atmosphere. We decided Forest Park is a satisfactory school. Here are some of our findings:

- You make satisfactory progress in your lessons.
- Standards are below average in mathematics and English; in science they are better.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- You enjoy school, feel safe and accept responsibility well.
- Your behaviour is good.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum helps you understand why it is important to be healthy and develops your interest in music.
- You are looked after very well by the school.
- The headteacher is leading the school well and the staff are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do a few things to help it improve further. They are:

- Make your writing better by improving your vocabulary and helping you write longer pieces of work.
- Help you to solve problems in mathematics.
- Make sure teachers plan work that helps everyone achieve well.
- Put improving your progress at the top of the list of things the school needs to do.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin Lead inspector