



Eaton Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124022
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 292863
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
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	Arbourfield Drive
School category	Community		Bucknall
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stoke-on-Trent ST2 9PF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 234760
Number on roll (school)	459	Fax number	01782 236403
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mick Finney
		Headteacher	Lynne Bradbury
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	30–31 January 2007	292863

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area where there is some significant economic and social deprivation. Almost all pupils are White British. There are many more pupils with learning difficulties than average. More pupils than usual enter or leave the school at times other than normal. There have been considerable staffing difficulties in recent years.

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 is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school has worked successfully to overcome major staffing difficulties and pupils are now achieving satisfactorily and reach standards that are a little below average by the time they leave.

Children make a really good start in the Nursery and Reception classes as there is a wide range of learning activities that focus on their particular needs. Provision in these classes is good and so children are making good progress. Teaching and learning in the rest of the school are satisfactory overall, although there is wide variation. There is not always a sufficient range of difficulty of work given to pupils, so pupils of all ability levels, particularly the more able, are not suitably challenged. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and improving. A few parents expressed concern about behaviour and it has been poor in recent years, with a high number of exclusions last year. However, good procedures have been put in place and are now showing their effect in a more calm and orderly school. Pupils' behaviour is now satisfactory.

One of the principal reasons for pupils' improving personal development is the good pastoral care and support offered by all adults. This is recognised by parents, who say such things as, 'The headteacher and staff are always approachable and ready to deal with problems.' Good links have been established with a variety of agencies that provide further support for pupils, particularly those with social and emotional problems.

Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. However, although pupils' progress is tracked closely from term to term, this information is not used well to set clear targets so that pupils know what they need to learn next. Care, guidance and support are therefore satisfactory overall. The curriculum is improved and is satisfactory and is made interesting for pupils, with a good number of visits and visitors.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been working for some years to achieve its current settled leadership team. This team has already put in place a number of strategies which are beginning to show results. For example, the team carries out a wide range of monitoring activities and successfully identifies ways in which pupils' progress can be improved. Given the progress that has been made in the recent past and the plans for future development, the school is satisfactorily placed to continue on its upward path.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the new tracking procedures to make sure that pupils know exactly what they need to learn next.
- Ensure that teachers always provide work that meets the differing academic needs of the full range of abilities in their classes.
- Work with parents and other agencies to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge well below the levels expected of children of this age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but their standards overall are still below expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. However, teachers focus well on basic skills and children reach broadly expected standards in their linking sounds to letters and their calculation skills.

Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory and they leave the school having reached standards that are a little below average. A particularly encouraging improvement is in standards in mathematics, which has been the weakest subject in recent years. Standards in mathematics are now at least as good as those in English. The high number of pupils with learning difficulties make the same progress as their classmates because their needs are identified early and good plans are put in place to address their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. A relative weakness is in pupils' multicultural awareness. The school has therefore invited speakers from groups such as 'Parents against Racism' to talk in assemblies. Links have also been made with a local school with a diverse ethnic population to further develop pupils' understanding.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by acting as prefects, as peer mediators to help resolve disputes, and some acting as tutors to younger pupils. They are fully involved with the running of the school through school development assemblies and the school council. They were instrumental in the decision to introduce a uniform into the school. They have raised money for a number of good causes and provide harvest hampers for senior citizens.

Pupils are beginning to understand the importance of a safe and healthy lifestyle but a minority are not putting their learning into practice, by eating healthily, for example. Pupils satisfactorily develop skills important for their future success, although they are not always given opportunities in lessons to take responsibility for their own learning and to evaluate their own progress. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. Too many have erratic attendance and this affects their academic progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the Nursery and Reception classes, teaching is particularly good because staff plan exciting activities for children, with a very strong focus on learning through play and

the development of language. As a result, children grow in confidence, enjoy learning and make good progress.

In the rest of the school, the quality of teaching is variable. In a minority of lessons, expectations for pupils' progress and behaviour are high and pupils are actively involved in learning. There are good relationships between pupils and adults in all classes. Pupils are therefore keen to do well and work hard. A further strength is the work of the teaching assistants and other adults. They are skilled and make an important contribution to pupils' progress. Occasionally, pace is affected by the inattention of some pupils, particularly boys, despite the teacher's high expectations. Teachers do not always provide a broad enough range of activities to match the needs and capabilities of all the pupils. There are times when pupils sit on the carpet for too long without learning anything new. There are examples of good marking which shows pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their work, but this is not consistent through the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, providing a broad range of activities which enables them to make good progress. Overall through the school, the curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development and satisfactorily to academic progress. The curriculum is not always planned to meet the full range of abilities of the pupils. The school is rightly developing creative subjects to engage pupils' imaginations and to increase enjoyment in their learning. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties, which is the result of the effective work of the new specialist team. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors, including involvement in a carnival project to raise awareness of the multicultural diversity of the community in which they live.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good levels of personal care and support are provided. Support staff are highly organised and skilled and make a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make, both academically and socially. They quickly identify any pupils experiencing difficulties and early intervention strategies are put in place. The school works effectively with external agencies, and the police liaison officer is a regular visitor to the school. The home-school liaison officer is working hard to develop links with parents and get them actively involved in supporting the school and their children's learning. This essential work is helping parents to understand the importance of regular attendance. Pupils joining in classes other than the Nursery are supported well. Developing links with the secondary school are smoothing the transition of pupils into the next phase of education.

The guidance that pupils receive about their work is not as good as it could be. There is an inconsistency in the use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils are working at the appropriate level and are being set challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Much of the energy and time of leadership and management in recent years has been taken up with addressing staffing difficulties. As a consequence, the leaders have so far not been able to introduce fully effective management systems. Development in the all-important area of improving pupils' progress has therefore been slow. However, the corner has just now been turned and the results of the work done are just beginning to have the desired effect.

The school is starting to gain an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and has put in place clear plans to address the latter. This picture is built up through various stages of discussion, which involves both parents' questionnaires and pupils' input. Monitoring and evaluation by the senior staff are satisfactory, but there is not a sufficiently tight focus on specific areas for development. This weakness has been recognised and plans for improvement are in place. Governors are keen and interested but are not fully involved in finding out for themselves what is going on. However, they have realised this and put in place a new initiative to give governors responsibility for specific policies, which makes their visits to school more focused.

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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?	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	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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	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.

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

Thank you so much for welcoming us when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed meeting and talking with many of you. Thank you for telling us so much about your school, which is providing a satisfactory education for you.

What we found out about your school:

- You make a really good contribution to help in running the school with the jobs you do, such as peer mentors, members of the school council and helpers.
- The youngest children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The school makes good use of other experts, such as the education welfare officer and your community policeman, to help you in school and in your community.
- The team of adults who help those of you who find your work difficult are doing well and helping you to make the same progress as your classmates.
- Many things are improving, such as your behaviour and the progress you make, as your headteacher and other teachers have made sound plans to make this happen.
- You make steady progress as teaching is satisfactory.

These are the things that your school needs to improve:

- The targets set to help you to know how you can improve your work are not sufficiently clear.
- The work you are given in lessons is not always matched to your particular abilities.
- Some of you don't come to school often enough and so you are not learning as well as you should be.

Keep up the good work and best wishes.