



Fulford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124085
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292887
Inspection date 6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fulford Road
School category	Community		Fulford
Age range of pupils	4-11		Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9QT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01889 505303
Number on roll (school)	67	Fax number	01889 505109
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mike Abbott
		Headteacher	Janice Tarr
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 6 December 2006	Inspection number 292887
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

All pupils are of White British heritage. They come from the village and surrounding area and only a few are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, although they are not distributed evenly across the school. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies and is usually at least average and sometimes above average. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. Two out of the three classes are being taught by new teachers this term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is showing several 'green shoots' of improvement under the clear and purposeful leadership of the headteacher. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make sound progress in the Reception Year and by the start of Year 1, most are working comfortably within the levels expected for their age. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils do particularly well in reading because these skills are promoted very effectively. Pupils do not always make as much progress as they could in writing because teachers do not provide them with enough purposeful written tasks in other subjects.

Good care, support and guidance enable pupils to develop good attitudes towards learning, to be kind to each other and to become responsible. Members of staff are welcoming and the school has a calm and friendly atmosphere. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy, enjoy school and attend regularly. One parent said of their child, 'he would go at the weekends if he could'. The school provides a wealth of interesting additional activities to enrich the satisfactory curriculum. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Members of staff provide valuable practical activities, although there are occasions when pupils do not learn at a quick enough pace. This is because teachers do not always provide them with work that matches their differing needs closely enough. The school has newly improved systems for assessing pupils' progress. These systems help to identify pupils needing additional support but are not yet used rigorously enough to check progress over time.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is providing a strong lead in planning for school improvement so that pupils can learn even more quickly. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled her to identify what the school could do better. Governors are enthusiastic and have a good understanding of how they can develop their roles further. These recent improvements demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Most parents are pleased that their children come to this school and are impressed by the work of the new headteacher. Two parents share the views held by many others when saying, 'the headteacher is parent friendly' and 'the school has many strengths'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pace of learning and ensure that teaching consistently builds on what pupils already know.
- Provide more opportunity for pupils to develop their writing across the curriculum.
- Use the new information on how well pupils are doing more rigorously to identify and eliminate any underachievement quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science and achievement is satisfactory. Children make the expected gains in the Reception Year, with progress in personal development being a particular strength. Children get on well together and are keen to learn. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in reading because they have good opportunities to use reading skills, and a specific programme run by trained parents supports individuals effectively. Progress in other subjects is satisfactory rather than good because there are occasions when teachers do not meet pupils' differing needs well enough. This is most noticeable in writing, where an overuse of worksheets in some lessons limits pupils' opportunities for writing independently. The school's information for checking how well pupils are doing shows that all groups of pupils achieve equally, including those with learning difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils support each other well and behave sensibly in lessons and around school. Children in the Reception class quickly develop good independence and make lots of friends. The way that pupils of different ages play together is very impressive. Older pupils are sociable and articulate and express very clearly why they are so happy at school: 'The teachers are so kind and caring and they give us lots of interesting things to do each day'. Pupils generally work hard, especially when doing practical activities in science or art. However, they do not always take enough care with their written work and sometimes are not involved enough in discussions when the pace of lessons is too slow.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They respond well to the many opportunities that they are given to take the initiative. For example, a Year 6 pupil has organised a popular dance club for younger pupils. Pupils take responsibility for composting waste and managing small budgets by running cake stalls for fundraising. These activities, in addition to pupils' good basic skills, prepare them well for the world of work. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. There is an active school council that is currently working on a worthwhile project to fund the restoration of the school bell to its rightful place in the bell tower.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with pupils and make learning purposeful. This helps make work interesting. Lessons are well resourced. For example, teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills. Teaching is most successful when pupils are taught in small groups, when they can benefit from

the individual support of teachers and skilled teaching assistants. When pupils are taught as a whole class, there are occasions when progress slows. This is because teachers sometimes keep talking to pupils for too long and they do not always ensure that work is matched well enough to their differing needs. This means that work is sometimes too hard or too easy for some pupils. In the Foundation Stage, the calm and sensitive approach of teachers and members of support staff and the well-organised classroom help children learn class routines quickly and make good progress in their personal development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Every child is provided with a stimulating curriculum and this helps to ensure that there are good levels of enjoyment in lessons. Pupils respond especially well to the many practical activities that are planned by teachers. Visits and visitors make a good contribution to learning and help to bring subjects alive. Pupils are encouraged to maintain their health and fitness through a good range of sporting activities and clubs. Music is particularly enjoyed by pupils either through music and singing lessons or through individual tuition.

Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills but pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills across the curriculum. There is a satisfactory curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage. Whilst children are given a wide range of interesting activities, the lack of easy access to an outdoor area sometimes limits the children's choices.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

In this small school, adults know all pupils very well. They work closely with parents and outside agencies, enabling them to support pupils' individual needs successfully. Pupils are made to feel safe and secure and have confidence in their teachers. Children are given sensitive support when they first start school in the Reception class, which helps them to settle into school life quickly.

The school has recently improved assessment procedures so that pupils' progress is monitored more frequently. The headteacher has begun to use this information more rigorously to ensure that differing needs are consistently being met. A strong feature of academic support is the way that pupils are given clear feedback on their work through marking and the setting of targets. Pupils like this because it, 'helps us to understand what we have done wrong so that we can do better next time'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher focuses well on improving teaching and standards at the school. Parents applaud the 'hardworking members of staff who have clear ideas of how they

would like the school to develop, grow and raise attainment'. This term, the pace of change has been slowed by changes in staffing. This has resulted in many additional responsibilities and a heavy workload for the headteacher. Nevertheless, school improvements are beginning to have a positive impact on increasing the speed at which pupils learn. For example, a 'precision teaching' project involving parents has increased pupils' progress in reading and mental arithmetic. New interactive whiteboards are being used well by teachers to engage the pupils' interest at the start of lessons.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher is perceptive and has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Training has a high priority and is being carefully targeted to have maximum impact. Subject leaders and the governing body carry out their responsibilities diligently and are beginning to increase their roles in monitoring pupils' achievement and in helping the headteacher to identify the next steps for development. For example, governors recently identified the need to improve provision in music and supported the school in making the necessary changes.

The school has a good partnership with its parents and with other schools in the area. One parent spoke for many other parents by saying, 'the culture of the school is positively changing towards more openness and more taking account of children's and parents' views'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	2
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	2
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?	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.

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 for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. We thought you were very polite and friendly. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some other things about you and your school:

- you reach higher standards than other children of your age by the time you leave school
- your teachers and parents help you to learn particularly quickly in reading
- you behave well and really enjoy the interesting things you can do at school
- teachers look after you well and help you to learn at a steady rate
- your headteacher and teachers are working hard to make your school even better
- your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- make sure that you learn quickly by giving you work that is neither too hard nor too easy
- give you more opportunity to use your writing in other subjects
- check more quickly that you all make enough progress during your time at the school.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future and hope that your Christmas performances went well. You can help your teachers by always working hard and trying your best.