



St James CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124260
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292936
Inspection date 22 November 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	Brook End
School category	Voluntary controlled		Longdon
Age range of pupils	4-11		Rugeley WS15 4PL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 490378
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	01543 490378
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Rob Davis
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 22 November 2006	Inspection number 292936
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© 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 and disabilities is well below average and attainment on entry to the Reception class is slightly above average.

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. Hard working and enthusiastic members of staff work together well as a team, enabling pupils to achieve well. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. Sensitive support helps children to settle quickly, make good progress and become confident. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average, although test results in reading are higher than those in writing. Pupils do well because teachers provide them with interesting, purposeful activities. This is especially noticeable in reading and mathematics where pupils learn most rapidly. Parent volunteers contribute well to the success in reading by providing additional support for individual pupils at the start of the day. A whole school focus on developing writing is having a good impact. Standards have already risen by the end of Year 2 and are now above average. There is more to be done to improve writing in Years 3 to 6. Whilst progress in writing is broadly satisfactory, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to extend their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum and this slows the pace at which skills improve.

Teaching and learning are good. Good relationships between members of staff and the pupils ensure that pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave sensibly even when working in the cramped classrooms. They demonstrate their thirst for learning by attending school regularly and by taking part in the wide range of clubs and visits. There is a satisfactory curriculum. Pupils develop basic skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education, although their understanding of cultural diversity is not developed well enough. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good care, guidance and support for the pupils. They know the pupils' personal needs well and have very thorough systems for assessing and monitoring progress in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). There are satisfactory systems to monitor work in other subjects, but these lack rigour. As a result, written work in science, history and geography is not consistently of a high enough standard, given pupils' capabilities.

Leadership is good and the school is managed well. The right priorities for school improvement are clearly identified and self-evaluation is realistic and accurate. Previous school developments have been successful in improving provision and as a result standards have risen. The school is well placed to improve further. Most parents are positive about the work of the school, especially the leadership and teaching. As one parent said of the school, 'It almost makes paying my taxes worthwhile.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve writing by the end of Year 6 by giving pupils more opportunity to write purposefully across the curriculum.
- Increase the rigour in monitoring subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT so that pupils produce work of consistently good quality.
- Provide more opportunity for pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of cultures other than their own.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Good arrangements when children start in the Reception class enable them to make good progress. They are working at or beyond the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6 and standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils perform better in reading than in writing because reading is supported particularly well by members of staff and parents. For example, parents have made 'story sacks' for the younger pupils and visiting poets have increased the pupils' interest in books. Recent developments in the way writing is being taught have enabled pupils in Years 1 and 2 to improve their skills, and standards are now above average by the end of Year 2. Whilst writing is also taught well in other year groups, opportunities for pupils to produce good quality written work across the curriculum are insufficient in Years 3 to 6. This affects the standard of pupils' non-fiction writing in particular. For example, pupils write few scientific reports in their own words.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love coming to school because 'it is fun' and they 'do lots of exciting things'. They work hard in lessons and are keen to learn. This is an important reason why they do well, with one boy summing up the views of others by saying, 'I enjoy art lessons because I'm not very good at it but I enjoy the challenge of getting better.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although pupils have a limited awareness of cultures other than their own. Pupils learn to get on well together, and by Year 6 they are confident and articulate individuals who have been prepared well for the next stage of their education. They take responsibility willingly by participating in a school council or becoming play leaders. Pupils take a very active part in the community by raising funds for charities and taking part in events such as the village produce show. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of taking regular exercise. They know why it is important to drink water though they do not always choose healthy options when snacking at playtimes. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe. For example, they explain clearly the importance of taking care when crossing the busy main road that runs through the village.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well in most lessons because of the effective way that teachers make work purposeful and motivate pupils. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils wrote with great enthusiasm about different characters because they were able to relate the work to their own experiences and to develop their own ideas and share them with others. In

the Foundation Stage, practical activities and the teacher's calm and patient support help children to settle to tasks quickly and this has a positive effect on learning. Throughout the school, lessons are well organised and interactive whiteboards are used successfully to illustrate and enliven lessons. Teachers involve pupils well in assessing their own learning and setting targets, helping them to understand how they can improve their work. Knowledgeable teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, especially when working with those who have learning difficulties. In most lessons, work is well matched to the individual needs of pupils. However in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education, pupils sometimes complete the same piece of written work whatever their ability. This slows the rate at which skills are improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school makes good use of educational visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning. Residential visits are especially enjoyed by pupils and make a good contribution to their personal development by helping them to learn to live together. Pupils are encouraged to maintain their health and fitness through a very good number of sporting activities and clubs.

The curriculum is well planned but does not include enough opportunities for pupils to learn about and to celebrate various cultures. Opportunities are therefore missed to acquaint pupils with a more diverse society than they have experienced so far in their lives. The strong focus on developing basic skills is largely effective through the teaching in English, although pupils do not get enough opportunities to produce good quality writing in other subjects across the curriculum. ICT is used frequently and to good effect, for example when pupils enjoy using their computer skills to write or to carry out research. In the Reception class, there is a good balance between teacher-led work and activities chosen by the children and this helps to develop good levels of independence. An attractive outdoor area is used well to support learning and to help pupils develop good physical skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe because they know that an adult will always listen to them if they are worried and will help them sort out their problems should they occur. All pupils are treated as part of the 'school family'. The school works well with parents to safeguard children. Children are well supported when they first start school in the Reception class and their progress is monitored carefully in all areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, assessments in English and mathematics are accurate and are used well to set the pupils challenging targets for improvement. In other subjects, the assessment of learning is less rigorous and, although satisfactory, provides limited information about how well different pupils are doing from term to term. Teachers carefully identify pupils with learning difficulties and set them clear targets to help them improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders are not complacent and there is a strong drive to improve provision and standards further. The headteacher makes good use of a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching to improve standards. For example, one teacher takes all classes for French and another teaches ICT to pupils in Years 3 to 6 enabling them to extend their skills more quickly. The school works very well with other local small schools to provide shared training when appropriate. Co-ordinators are successful in leading and managing developments in English, mathematics and ICT. Test information is analysed carefully and used to identify what aspects of English and mathematics need to be improved further. For example, the school has been successful in improving the pupils' ability to carry out subtraction in mathematics. Other subjects are not monitored frequently enough to ensure that standards are consistently as good as they could be. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and take a keen interest in the work of the school. They are aware of the need to monitor the school's work more rigorously so that the school can be held to account more fully.

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?	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	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	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?	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?	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 for welcoming us to your school in such a polite and friendly way and for showing us your work. We are pleased that you come to such a good school.

Here are some other things about you and your school:

- Good teaching helps you to do well, especially in reading and mathematics.
- All adults in school are very kind and caring and they give you good support.
- You really enjoy the interesting activities provided by the teachers.
- We especially liked your 'spooky castle' animations.
- You behave sensibly even though the classrooms are a bit small.
- Members of staff and governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to do better writing in all subjects.
- Make sure that teachers check that your written work is always good enough in science, religious education, history and geography.
- Give you more opportunity to learn about cultures and beliefs other than your own.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard and trying your best.