

Dilhorne Endowed (A) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124336
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292962
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Cole

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Hulse
Headteacher	Lynne Willis
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Godley Lane Dilhorne Stoke-on-Trent ST10 2PF
Telephone number	01538 753168
Fax number	01538 753168

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school draws pupils from the small rural village in which it is located and from further afield. Pupils' backgrounds are very varied, although almost all are from White British backgrounds. The make-up of pupils starting at the school varies markedly from year to year. Generally, pupils start at the school with attainment that is average or a little below. Currently, about a third of the pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), a high proportion by national standards. The school has experienced a high level of staff turnover at all levels during the last three years, including temporary arrangements for leadership and some teaching posts. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

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 with some good features. A strength of the school is the pupils' good personal development and well-being. This reflects the good quality of the care, support and guidance the staff provide and which pupils and their parents value. Pupils grow well in confidence, make good relationships with those around them and develop positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and feel happy and safe there. Pupils attend well and they join enthusiastically in school activities. Pupils' good behaviour provides a good basis for learning and pupils achieve satisfactorily. They get off to a good start in the Reception year, where they achieve standards broadly in line with those expected at their age. Generally, arrangements for the Reception pupils are at least satisfactory, but a lack of sufficient space limits the curriculum in terms of opportunities for practical, creative and exploratory learning. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make further satisfactory progress and attain standards broadly similar to the national average.

Both teaching and learning and the curriculum provided are of satisfactory quality. There has been good recent improvement in systems for measuring pupils' progress and identifying their learning needs. However, there is some inconsistency in using this information to plan lessons, and in giving pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work. Sometimes tasks do not sufficiently challenge some pupils and they are not encouraged to concentrate or try hard enough. The curriculum has some lively elements and is well supported by links with other schools and organizations. These combine with a good range of educational visits, visitors and after-school activities to enrich learning and enjoyment significantly. There is well-planned work and support for pupils with LDD. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's determined leadership has brought greater stability after a period of high staff turnover that caused some disruption in pupils' education. This has recently led to good improvement in the school, including in the teaching. This is improving pupils' progress. The school has a good understanding of its own performance and knows how it can become better, although a number of the initiatives are too recent and are yet to have a full impact on raising standards. Governors provide good support for the school and work effectively with teachers to promote improvement. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure lessons consistently challenge all pupils to concentrate well, try hard and make all the progress they can.
- Improve provision for Reception children to learn through creative, practical and exploratory activities.
- Help all pupils to understand clearly how they can improve their work.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their standards are broadly average. With the very small number of pupils, the profile of pupils' abilities within year groups varies significantly. Consequently, pupils' results in national tests fluctuate from year to year. Over recent years, though, the general picture is of standards that are broadly average. Measures of pupils' progress

at each stage of their passage through the school show that most of them are attaining the standards they should in relation to their previous attainment. Recent measures show some good improvement in pupils' progress, with some making rapid progress as they make up for some earlier shortfalls when staffing difficulties hindered the teaching. A few more able pupils make less progress than they might because the teaching is not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils with LDD make satisfactory progress towards individual targets and there are also signs of recent improvement in their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Reception children soon learn to enjoy school and join in keenly and confidently in lessons and other activities. A happy, friendly and lively participation in school life is maintained through to Year 6. This, together with pupils' good relationships and sensible behaviour, is reflective of the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, helping them to think carefully about rights and wrongs and their responsibilities to others. Pupils' strong sense of well-being includes a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. They know how to eat healthily and they participate enthusiastically in a good range of exercise and sporting opportunities. Pupils contribute well to the life of the school through the lively debates of the school council. They enrich the life of the wider community through participation in local arts and drama events, musical and dramatic performances for parents and the community, and Cream Teas for local residents, when pupils take orders, wait at tables and look after the finances. Pupils' growth in confidence, good teamwork skills and constructive attitudes are preparing them effectively for continuing education and the demands of future adult and working life. However, their current progress in basic academic skills means that their preparation for the future is satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A positive feature of the teaching is the good support given to pupils, especially if they are finding difficulties in learning. Pupils speak warmly of the extensive help teachers and teaching assistants give them. As a result, pupils are confident learners who take pride in their achievement. The teaching is quick and planned activities promote enjoyment in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to meet the challenge of supporting pupils, who differ widely in age and ability within the same classroom. Following recent improvements, there are suitably systematic procedures for assessing pupils' progress and planning their next steps in learning. However, the novelty of these procedures and the many recent staff changes are reflected in some inconsistencies in their implementation. Consequently, there are times when some pupils' tasks do not sufficiently challenge them and for parts of some lessons, many pupils do not concentrate or try as hard as they might. Two older pupils recognised this when they agreed, 'Sometimes we could do harder work'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Programmes of work in the main subjects promote satisfactory progress. The recent introduction in literacy of a more structured approach to teaching 'phonics' skills has the potential to improve

the reading standards. Individual schemes of work and support for pupils with LDD have been improved and are carefully planned. The curriculum covers the required subjects and benefits from additional opportunities for pupils to have introductory lessons in French and German. This, like some elements of other subjects, is made possible by the good links the school maintains with other schools and organizations. These extend the pupils' opportunities for learning and enjoyment. The curriculum is also enriched by a good number and range of educational visits and visitors and after-school clubs. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are fortunate to have three annual opportunities to take part in residential educational visits that encourage them to be independent and enterprising. The outdoor accommodation for Reception children has improved since the last inspection. However, there continues to be very little suitable space for practical, exploratory or creative activity, although the children's achievement is still satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The close and caring relationships between staff and pupils in this very small school mean that pupils are well understood and well supported as individuals. There is careful identification, supported by external specialists, of pupils with LDD. Pupils say they are looked after well and given all the help they need by school staff. Formal procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their welfare are thorough and effective. Guidance on learning is effective for most pupils. Most older pupils know how well they are doing, remember their targets and understand what they can do to improve their work. However, some younger pupils have difficulty remembering their targets and are not really clear how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has tackled with determination the need to ensure consistency at all levels. The school has improved considerably in the two years since the headteacher's appointment and it is moving towards greater stability in staffing. Staff teamwork is good and supports the positive 'can do' ethos the headteacher encourages in colleagues and pupils. The school evaluates its performance self-critically, honestly and accurately and makes relevant and ambitious plans for improvement. Governors contribute conscientiously and effectively to these processes. Although many school improvements are new and not yet fully or consistently implemented, measures of pupils' short-term progress show that their achievement is improving.

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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	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?	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	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	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?	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	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

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dilhorne Endowed Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST10 2PF

I would like to thank all of you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you.

It was good to find that you enjoy school a lot and that you get on well with each other and with the adults. You have a sensible attitude to school and to your work, and your behaviour is good. Your personal development is good and I could see that you feel safe and happy at school. All of this is helping you to learn. You make satisfactory progress in your work.

Some of you told me how much help the teachers and the other adults give you. I could see this for myself. The adults look after you well. They give you good help and encouragement. The teachers give you suitable lessons and usually provide the right kind of work for you to do. They also organise plenty of interesting visits and events and put on a good number of after-school activities which you enjoy.

I have said that, on the whole, yours is a satisfactory school. The adults in charge of the school are doing a good job. They are trying hard to improve the school. However, I have suggested three ways that the school could give you more help. I think some of you could make better progress in some of your lessons if you were given harder work that made you concentrate and try harder. Also, I think the Reception children need more space for practical work, painting and other activities where you need to move about. Finally, younger pupils need more help to understand how they can improve their work.

I wish you all the best for the future.

M H Cole Lead Inspector