

Gladstone Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124031
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	295432
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Frances Gillam

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	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phill Woodall
Headteacher	David M Eaglestone
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Anchor Road Sandford Hill Stoke-on-Trent ST3 5EW
Telephone number	01782 233167
Fax number	01782 233165

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gladstone Primary is a new school created from the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school. It is housed on two sites, approximately half a mile apart. Gladstone is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than in most schools. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a few of whom are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is higher than average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is much lower than expected for three-year-olds. The school is part of the local authority Beacon and Extended Schools networks. At the time of the inspection, five staff were on temporary contracts covering for teachers on maternity and sickness leave.

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 that has built up a good reputation with parents and the local community since it was established in September 2004. Pupils achieve well in their work and they make good progress in their personal development and well-being. Pupils like school and they behave well. They act sensibly and safely and take good care of themselves and others. A strength of the good care, guidance and support is the way that adults value and celebrate children's efforts and support their personal development and well-being. These features ensure that pupils grow in confidence, have belief in themselves and strive to do their best. Targets provide guidance for pupils about how to improve their work but these are not always tailored well enough for individuals, and some pupils do not fully understand them. Pupils make very healthy choices about their diet and take regular exercise because of the very good emphasis the school places on healthy lifestyles. They make a good contribution to the community, taking part in local events and raising money for charity. Through raising funds for charities, they gain a good understanding of others less fortunate than themselves. The good curriculum provides an extensive range of exciting activities, including sports and creative clubs, which support pupils' learning and contributes well to their good enjoyment of school. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. From the low level of attainment on entry they achieve well, even though standards are well below average on entry to Year 1. Good teaching helps pupils, including those with learning difficulties and looked-after children, to make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers plan well and ensure that lessons provide a good balance between listening, discussion and pupils doing things for themselves. This variety of activities leads to a good level of involvement and concentration, and pupils working productively. Pupils, though, could do better in writing, especially the boys. Sometimes writing activities fail to motivate and engage boys, and opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and factual writing skills further in subjects across the curriculum are not always good enough. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but are not always consistent in providing clear information that tells pupils how well they have done and how they could improve further. Good leadership and management, and strong and positive teamwork, have ensured a smooth transition to the new primary school. The head and deputy headteacher inspire and motivate the school community. As a result, all staff and governors have a clear vision for improvement and a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Strategies to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills are successful and are greatly enhanced by the school's excellent involvement with parents, outside agencies and the local authority. The leadership team knows what needs to be done to move the school forward now and they acknowledge that writing standards and boys' achievements need to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have better opportunities to develop their creative and factual writing skills across all subjects and ensure that activities motivate and engage boys in their learning in order to improve their achievements in writing.
- Ensure that teachers make better use of targets and marking to tell pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average by the time pupils leave the school. Children in the Foundation Stage do well. Staff are responding well to the increasing number of children with speech and language difficulties. They devise well-conceived activities that build effectively on children's experiences and help them to make good progress. Basic skills are taught well, though most children are still working below the level expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils make further good progress from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 6. Tracking of pupils' progress is robust. It helps the school to set challenging goals, which most pupils achieve, and ensures the school quickly identifies pupils who may need extra support. This leads to the provision of well-focused help for groups and individuals. Pupils produce some good quality written work in English, although they do not always do as well as they should in this area. Pupils, particularly boys, do not always produce writing of the quality of which they are capable in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Many pupils rightly comment that behaviour is good. They say their school is friendly and that most children get on well together. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory; however, this is affected by a minority of pupils who do not attend as regularly as other pupils do. The school is doing all it can to work constructively with a small number of parents to help to improve their children's attendance. Pupils have a healthy outlook on life and are careful about their diet; they make very good use of the school's sporting clubs. The school council works hard on behalf of pupils and helps to make the school a better place to be. Pupils are contributing their ideas to the plans for the new school building and are very excited at the prospect of having new classrooms and work areas. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many older pupils set a good example by helping out around the school. Pupils usually act safely and they show respect and care for themselves and others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching enables pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, to do well. Children make a positive start because activities engage them and build well on their previous learning. This good start is built on effectively and throughout the school staff, for the most part, plan the next steps in learning carefully. These positive features of teaching help pupils to succeed. Teachers use drama in English and are providing more opportunities for themed writing events but these are not yet motivating boys sufficiently well in writing. Teaching assistants play a valuable part in supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Sometimes, though, in whole-class sessions, some teachers do not use adults well enough to support pupils who may, for example, be struggling when reading aloud with the class. Staff recognise and praise pupils' achievements and this helps pupils to realise their own worth and gives them the confidence to 'have a go'. Pupils work hard on their own or with others because teachers set out their expectations clearly and explain to pupils what they are going to learn and why. Though teachers mark pupils' work

regularly, written comments do not always explain to pupils how well they have done and how they can do even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An exciting range of activities outside normal lessons, including sports and creative clubs, visits and visitors, supports pupils' personal development and well-being successfully and contributes well to their enjoyment of school. Pupils experience an interesting range of learning activities, which for the most part build well on what the pupils have learned before and which help to prepare them successfully for the future. Increasingly, staff are planning well-conceived writing opportunities across subjects but this is not yet fully embedded in all classes and so leads to uneven progress for some pupils in writing

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They say staff are kind and there is always someone they can turn to if they have a problem. Robust child protection procedures and the school's very good work on healthy lifestyles help pupils to understand the necessity of exercise and a good diet, as well as the need to care for themselves and others. These features contribute very well to pupils' personal development and well-being. All pupils have learning targets to help them improve but not all pupils understand what they mean and some targets are not always relevant for some individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good systems to evaluate the school's work provide senior managers, staff and governors with a clear idea of its effectiveness. These systems identify the right priorities for improvement and the action taken often brings about change for the better. Work undertaken with the local authority, health and social services to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills is proving very successful. Good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage ensure that initiatives to improve children's communication and language skills are successful. As a result, children are progressing well. These features show that the school has a good capacity to improve further, though senior managers acknowledge that boys' performance in writing requires improvement and that they have yet to fully address the weaknesses in writing across subjects and in aspects of guidance for pupils.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	3
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	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	1
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?	2
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	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 25 April 2007 Dear Children, Gladstone Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 5EW Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. The inspection team really enjoyed meeting you and seeing all the exciting things you were doing. You have a good school. The people in charge and your teachers do a good job and this helps you to do well in your work. Here are some of the good things we found about your school.
- You are hard working and this helps you to make good progress and reach standards in your work which are similar to those expected by Year 6.
- You behave well and you are friendly and polite.
- You are very keen to grow up strong and healthy and so you make sensible choices about what you eat and take plenty of exercise.
- Your school council helps to make your school a better place to be and you are kind to those less fortunate than yourselves.
- You enjoy school, especially all the interesting activities and clubs you have outside normal lessons.
- Your teachers and all the adults in your school look out for you and you feel well cared for. To improve the school still further we have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on two things.
- To make sure you have better opportunities to develop your writing in all subjects and that writing activities are more interesting and exciting, especially for boys.
- To make sure your teachers give you better information about how well you are doing and how you can improve your work and do even better. You can all help by keeping up the hard work. With best wishes for the future, Fran Gillam Lead Inspector