



Amington Heath Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124176
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 296373
Inspection dates 14 June 2006 to 15 June 2006
Reporting inspector Deana Holdaway HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Quince
School category	Community		Amington
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 4EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01827 475161
Number on roll	194	Fax number	01827 475161
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Martin Jenkins
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2006	Headteacher	Ms Jane Mason

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Amington Heath Community School is a smaller than average school situated in a suburb of Tamworth. The school serves a community with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and of those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well above average. Nearly all children are of White British heritage.

The school was last inspected in October 2003 when it was deemed to require special measures. There have been four headteachers in three years. The most recent headteacher took up her post in October 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvements are required in relation to standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress but standards in both Key Stages 1 and 2 are too low. As a consequence the school gives inadequate value for money.

The rate of achievement is inconsistent throughout the school and is inadequate overall. Pupils make best progress in the few classes where teaching is good. Although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, improvements in this area have been slow to develop. All adults provide the pupils with good levels of care.

Since the last inspection, attendance and relationships with parents have improved. Parents are more actively involved in the school's events and family learning classes help them to support their children's learning in and out of school. In addition, the management of provision for those children with learning difficulties or disabilities is now satisfactory although more directed support is needed for children during lessons.

Since her appointment, the headteacher has tackled the school's deficit budget with appropriate urgency and quickly identified priorities to help the school improve further. The leadership team is united in its vision for the future. They lead by good example and have demonstrated their ability to secure the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in all subjects but particularly English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards and achievement are inadequate. The school agrees that improvements are required. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Children with learning difficulties make satisfactory and often good progress.

The children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are well below average. They make good progress so that, by the end of the Reception year, most have attained the standards expected for their age. However, too many children lack confidence in the recognition of letter

sounds and frequently used words. As a consequence, reading and writing remain weaker than other areas of learning.

Standards in the school have been below average for several years although there have been some gradual improvements since 2003. By the end of Year 2, pupils generally attain the lower band of expected standards for their age but too few achieve average or above standards in English, mathematics or science. Although the pupils spell common words correctly and punctuate accurately, they are not able to write in a range of styles for different purposes. In mathematics, the pupils experience an appropriate breadth of topics but there are too few opportunities to apply what they know and can do to real life situations.

In 2005, standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 remained below average and the school did not achieve its targets. Teachers' assessments of current Year 6 pupils indicate that about two thirds of them are likely to achieve the expected level or above in English, mathematics and science. These results would be a significant improvement on last year's but remain below national averages.

When pupils' prior attainment, gender and other factors that are known to influence performance are all taken into account, progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 is significantly below average. The school's record of assessments provides evidence of extensive underachievement in a number of year groups, leaving Years 2 and 6 to bear the brunt of catching up.

During lessons, progress is impeded when teachers do not plan learning in developmental stages, building on prior knowledge, skills and understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils behave well and exclusions are rare. The school is successful in promoting good attitudes and behaviour through weekly achievement awards, 'smiley face' stickers, and praise for individual pupils. Teachers build positive relationships with pupils and show that they value them as individuals. The school has been successful in improving attendance over the last few years and it is now satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils work and play well together and learn from each other. In lessons they reflect on their individual talents and concerns. They learn to value themselves and others and recognise the need for rules to govern conduct. Pupils are beginning to appreciate cultural diversity through 'Black Awareness Week', the Chinese New Year assembly, and the consideration of other religious festivals in religious education. They show concern for the safety of others in the mature way they behave around the school and they feel safe from bullying. Those with low self esteem strengthen their confidence through an effective emotional and social support programme. Pupils are encouraged to eat fresh fruit at snack times and healthy options are available at lunchtimes. They understand the need for healthy eating and value weekly physical education. A range of activities, including the school council, enables many pupils to develop a sense of

responsibility and to make a positive contribution to the school and to the neighbourhood. Involvement in enterprise projects, where pupils conduct market research, analyse data, advertise and sell products and keep accounts, develops their awareness of the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall but there is not enough good teaching to help pupils make up lost ground. Even when teaching is satisfactory some weaknesses remain. Where teaching is good pupils make most progress, they are interested in their work, enthusiastic about learning, and motivated to achieve their best. One girl in Year 6 said her favourite subject was mathematics because, 'We get lots of problems and I like using my brain.' Pupils make better than expected progress in those classes where teachers keep an accurate record of their progress against National Curriculum levels and explain how they could improve further through regular and concise marking.

In some lessons, teachers are not clear about what the pupils should be learning and activities are not matched well to the pupils' abilities. Too many lesson plans fail to identify how teaching assistants can support pupils effectively.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well managed and appropriate agencies are involved in supporting these pupils' needs. However, they could be better supported during lessons. The school encourages parents' involvement in reviewing their children's progress and agreeing suitable targets. Parental involvement has improved since the last inspection. Family learning classes, attendance at consultation evenings, school events and newsletters all keep the parents informed and included.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Subjects are covered in sufficient breadth but planning lacks imagination and it provides too few opportunities for investigative work. Whilst knowledge is broadened generally, the skills unique to each subject are not fully developed. In some of the better lessons, the teachers captured current events thus bringing relevance and interest to the curriculum. The pupils' excitement and enthusiasm came through in their writing recently when a book study in Year 6 coincided with the national release of the film version. Most teachers identify natural links across subjects so there is greater coherence to learning.

The school organises a 'Discovery Day' every month where the focus of learning is problem solving and investigation. The pupils report that they enjoy these days because they are fun and they get to work in teams. These events identify a clear learning purpose and outcome and, at the same time, capture the pupils' imagination and joy

in learning. All classes have regular times, such as circle time, for pupils to discuss issues that are important to them. Every day a short social time is built into the school day to encourage healthy eating and communication skills. There are a variety of clubs to extend children's experiences and give them a chance to shine in activities such as sport, music and creative arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good levels of care for its pupils. All adults try very hard to support the pupils so that they are emotionally settled and develop a sense of worth. Good support is available for pupils with low self esteem and those with behavioural difficulties. In one class, where there had been a number of staff changes, pupils said they felt they could share any worries with their teaching assistant and further examples they gave showed the extent of their trust in her. In those classes where pupils made satisfactory or better progress, the teachers regularly: assessed the needs of the pupils; provided guidance for improvement in regular marking; and helped the pupils to accurately evaluate their own work and that of others. Pupils' opinions count and pupils contribute enthusiastically to discussions about improvements to issues such as the classroom and playground environments. During discussions, pupils affirmed that they felt safe and were free from bullying.

The school promotes a healthy lifestyle through a healthy eating approach, regular physical exercise and after school activities, such as football training and a keep fit club. Staff are committed to promoting the health and safety of pupils. Child protection arrangements are secure and risk assessments are carried out for activities in school and for off-site visits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of development. The headteacher's clear vision for the future of the school is shared by a newly appointed team of senior staff. Together, they have introduced robust systems for tracking pupils' progress, identified pockets of underachievement, and deployed resources effectively.

Members of the senior leadership team monitor the performance of others and take appropriate action. Some improved achievement is beginning to emerge, although achievement overall is still an area in need of improvement. The new team demonstrates secure knowledge and understanding of what needs to be done. The team acknowledges the need to improve the quality of teaching and to lead by good example.

Efficient management of teachers' performance ensures that staff have specific targets relating to pupils' achievement. Staff are deployed sensibly and arrangements for in-school professional development include regular observations of other staff teaching.

Managers ensure that pupils are well looked after and are educated in a safe environment. They take steps to ensure that pupils enjoy school. Managers have responded to pupils' requests to provide an outdoor classroom. Resources and specialist equipment are adequate and the headteacher is reducing the school's overspend.

Parents are supportive of the school and good account is taken of their views and concerns. Governors are gaining knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what needs to be done to raise standards. Some are developing the expertise to be able to support and challenge senior managers. The inspectors agree with the school that the leadership and management have the capacity to improve the school further.

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

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome and for helping us with the inspection of your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and watching your lessons, assemblies and playtimes. We think that your school is a friendly and happy place.

These are the good things about your school.

It is a friendly place and most of you behave well in lessons and outside at playtimes.

You like your new headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants and are confident that they will always help you.

You are getting better at coming to school regularly.

You enjoy 'Discovery Days' and would like more of these exciting events.

You are trying to make your work better.

We have asked the teachers and governors to make your school better over the next year and then another inspector will visit to check that things have improved well enough. You need to be helped by your teachers to learn more quickly so that you know and understand much more by the end of each year in school. This means that you will have to do your very best to get better at reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.