

Stocksfield Avenue Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108477
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	301728
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI

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	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Terry Cooney
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2003
School address	St Cuthbert's Road Fenham Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE5 2DQ
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Stocksfield Avenue Primary School is larger than the average sized primary school and is situated to the west of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background or who are at the early stages of learning English is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also lower than that found nationally. A small number of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school is subject to re-organisation proposals and a new school building is currently being built as part of a local authority private finance initiative scheme. The school is closely linked to a children's centre. There are currently 39 pupils in the Nursery who all attend full time. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Green Flag Eco-Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark Silver Award, Investors in People Award and Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stocksfield Avenue Primary School is a good school. There is a new school building currently being constructed on the school site and the headteacher, staff and governors have taken every opportunity to ensure that this is providing a valuable learning opportunity for pupils as well as making sure pupils are very safe.

The successful personal development of the pupils is a reflection of the good care and support given to them. They say they feel safe in school and they know there is always someone they can talk to if they have a worry or concern. Pupils behave very well and report that there is no bullying. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and enjoy opportunities to participate in out of school activities, such as sport. They contribute well to the school, for example as members of the school council or Eco Club, and also benefit from opportunities to work with members of the local community and other agencies. The majority of parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care provided by the school. One parent echoes the views of many when they say, 'This is a good school and I would recommend it to anyone.' Many parents comment on the friendliness and approachability of the staff and the good support their child receives if they have a problem.

Most children start school with skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress overall, although progress is variable across Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards which are above average, particularly in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving at a higher level in mathematics is above average and significantly above average in science. However, fewer pupils achieve higher levels in English.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and are improving as a result of effective monitoring by the headteacher and other senior staff. They clearly identify any pupils who are underachieving and ensure appropriate support is given to promote their progress. This is having a positive impact on raising standards steadily, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils have a good understanding of what they are learning in each lesson because of the clear expectations shared with them. However, they are not so aware of what they need to do to improve their work over time. Marking is not always as effective or as consistent as it should be. The curriculum engages pupils very well. It is greatly enhanced by opportunities to extend their learning, for example, by working with the organisation Groundwork on developing a presentation on global warming. Opportunities for music, dance and drama, particularly participating in school performances, greatly improve the confidence and self-esteem of pupils. The curriculum provides good opportunities for using local resources and involving parents, governors and members of the community in the pupils' learning. Regular focus weeks are organised, including the recent one on 'construction'. However, the curriculum in the Foundation Stage does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, both indoors and outdoors.

Good leadership and management are based on effective monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and senior leadership team. They accurately identify and correct shortcomings. Subject leadership is good and has led to improved achievement, particularly in science and mathematics. Governors are very involved in the life of the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They, along with the headteacher and staff have demonstrated their commitment to raising standards of achievement for pupils. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children learn in a caring and safe environment. Parents appreciate the way induction arrangements are effective in helping their child to settle and in supporting their personal development. Teaching is good and is well focused on early literacy and mathematics. Consequently, children make good progress in these key areas. Specific time is allocated to successfully helping children improve their speaking and listening skills and their confidence. Activities where adults work alongside children are interesting and motivate them well. However, at times children are too directed and have too few opportunities to make choices in their learning. Assessment procedures are good because they are centred on continuous observations of children. The information gathered is used well to inform day-to-day planning. This means children are well challenged and their learning is extended. The curriculum is satisfactory although the quality and range of learning opportunities both indoors and outside is limited. Leadership is good. The strengths of the provision are well recognised and appropriate areas for development have been identified.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English, particularly for higher ability pupils.
- Improve consistency in the quality of marking and guidance so that pupils have a clear understanding about how to improve their work.
- Improve those aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum which will allow children greater choice in the activities in which they engage and provide them with more opportunities to work independently both in the classrooms and outdoors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. They are higher in science and mathematics than they are in English. Pupils achieve well. When they enter the school their skills are typical of their age group, although a minority has immature speaking and listening skills. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is above that expected for their age. Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 standards in all subjects are significantly above average and have been so for a number of years. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is variable. It is particularly good in years 5 and 6. In the past it has slowed down in Years 3 and 4. However, the school has recently begun to rigorously assess and track pupils' progress. Consequently, those who lag behind are now quickly identified and receive additional support. As a result, there is an improving trend in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and, in the 2007 tests, pupils exceeded their targets.

The proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level in mathematics is above average and in science is significantly above average. However, in English too few pupils reach the higher levels. Boys tend to achieve better than girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those whose first language is not English achieve particularly well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy, enjoying the wide variety of activities provided. Their behaviour is very good and they show consideration for each other. They feel safe, saying that the staff support them

and are always willing to help with any difficulties they may have. Safety with regard to the Internet and other technologies is now being considered and parents and children have received effective input from school staff.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is evident from the friendly faces, warm welcome for visitors and a willingness to involve others in their activities. Pupils are proud of their school. There is a strong sense of community, demonstrated by various fund raising activities and involvement in a wide range of community projects. The Eco Club and the effective school council are examples of ways in which the children influence the life of the school, bringing about positive change in aspects such as recycling and growing organic vegetables in the school allotment. Pupils appreciate the importance of eating healthily and are keen to take part in sporting activities, with a range of extra curricular activities being in place. Projects involving the local Education Business Partnership and other in-school activities develop the pupils' group work and leadership skills well.

Punctuality and attendance are monitored carefully. They have improved recently and attendance is satisfactory. This is due to a range of strategies being put in place by the school in conjunction with the local authority.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils behave very well in lessons and have positive attitudes towards their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in their teaching. They plan effectively together in year groups to ensure consistency and progression in delivering the curriculum, particularly where pupils are set into ability groups. Teamwork is strong with staff supporting each other to share expertise in different subjects. Teachers explain clearly to children what they are expected to learn in each lesson and what they have to do to succeed. They challenge pupils well with appropriate questions to promote their thinking skills and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. Pupils respond well and, for example in mathematics lessons, they give clear reasons for their answers to problems and are able to demonstrate the methods they have used. In good lessons, work is closely tailored to the needs of pupils and assessment is used very effectively within the lesson to identify pupils who need help and appropriate support is given, often by very effective support staff. However, teaching is occasionally less effective when pupils do not have the opportunity to be engaged in independent learning and practical activities. These lessons consist mainly of adult input and pupils do not always work at their own pace. Consequently, higher ability pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements well. It is planned effectively to meet the needs of most pupils and is responsive to local circumstances. A new school building is in the process of being constructed on the site and the school has taken every opportunity to involve pupils in the process, creating a valuable learning experience for them. A wide variety of visits and visitors to the school greatly enhance the curriculum, including opportunities to work with theatre companies and storytellers. Opportunities to engage in drama and perform to an audience in class assemblies and school productions greatly enhance

the confidence and self-esteem of pupils. The school effectively incorporates literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum. There are high participation rates in a wide variety of out of school activities including music and sports activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall, this aspect of the school's work is good. Pupils say they feel safe and always have someone to turn to for help if they need it. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place and vulnerable pupils are well looked after because of the close links with external agencies. Aspects of personal and social education are central to the school's ethos with one child commenting that, 'Circle time is great because you can get things off your chest.' There is a good focus on health education and pupils are actively encouraged to make healthy choices in their diet and to take exercise.

Systems to track pupils' progress and to support their learning are satisfactory and, although at an early stage, are developing well. The needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and effective steps are taken to give them appropriate support. Although there is good care and support for pupils, guidance to help them improve their work is inconsistent. The quality of marking of work is variable. Where it is good it provides pupils with constructive feedback and indicates how their work could be improved. Although pupils know what they need to do to achieve in each lesson, they are less aware of what they need to do to achieve in the longer term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team are clearly focused on raising standards in pupils' work and promoting their personal development. The senior management team, including core subject leaders, monitor and evaluate the work of the school very effectively. This is evident from the school's accurate self-evaluation and the detailed school improvement plan which identifies the most important areas to be improved. Subject leaders also work well to support staff in extending their expertise. The school has made good progress in dealing with the issues from the previous inspection. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Marking, although improved, is inconsistent. The school has very good links with outside agencies to promote the personal development and well-being of pupils. This is an inclusive school where all pupils are valued and where they have an opportunity to voice their opinions and ideas. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They are closely involved in the work of the school and support in practical ways. They have a good understanding of the strengths and the areas to be improved and challenge the school effectively to improve further. They have been closely involved in the planning of the new school and have taken every opportunity to involve members of the local community. The governors take their financial responsibilities seriously and ensure good value for money. The capacity for the school to improve is good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 November 2007

Dear pupils

Inspection of Stocksfield Avenue Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 2DQ

Thank you very much for your very warm welcome when the inspection team visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit and enjoyed talking to you about your school. Please thank your parents/carers for completing the questionnaires and tell them that we took their views into account.

We think your school is a good school. Many things impressed us, including:

- how very well you all behave in lessons and around the school
- your understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe
- how much you enjoy the opportunities to work with theatre groups, storytellers, artists and musicians and also in being involved in school performances and class assemblies, sometimes involving tap dancing
- the ways in which you are learning a great deal from watching your new school being built and working with the 'construction team'
- how aware you are of issues such as global warming, partly due to the good work of the 'Eco Club'
- the ways in which the headteacher and all of the staff work very hard to help you learn and look after you very well
- how much the governors know about the school because they also come in to work with you.

There are some things which we thought your school could do better to help you learn even more. We think that you could achieve better results in English and particularly those of you who are more able. We have asked the school to make sure that marking helps you to make your work even better, and ensure that you know how to achieve better in the longer term. We have asked the school to provide more exciting opportunities for learning for young children in Reception and Nursery, both indoors and outdoors.

Thank you for helping us to learn so much about your school. You should be very proud of yourselves. Enjoy your new school.

Best wishes

Christine Inkster HMI

on behalf of the whole team