

# Waterside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123993
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	320671
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Carrington

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	215
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carl Lawton
<b>Headteacher</b>	H Pickin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Eastwood Road Hanley Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 234630
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 234631

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school moved into new buildings at the start of 2007. Just under a half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is over twice that found in most primary schools. An above average proportion of pupils do not complete all of their primary education at the school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than in other schools of a similar size. Many families in the area experience considerable hardship. The attainment of children when they start in the nursery is low. When the school was last inspected it was judged to require special measures.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Waterside Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Since June 2006, it has made good progress in correcting the many weaknesses which affected the school. The headteacher has provided good leadership with very clear focus on improving the key things that contribute to pupils' good learning. Good leadership and management have led to considerable improvement in teaching quality, which is now good. Pupils are now learning well in lessons in all parts of the school. This is influencing standards, which are rising, and are average at the end of Year 6, although fewer pupils than might be expected reach the higher levels in their work. The good teaching and learning are fairly recent accomplishments and the full impact on pupils' overall achievement has yet to filter through. Thus, achievement is satisfactory for pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, but it is improving steadily.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance has been improved and is now average. Pupils' preparation for the next step of their education and life outside school is also satisfactory because of the sound development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils generally behave well, and lessons are much more settled and productive than they were. This is due to teachers' raised expectations of behaviour and work. There is much enjoyment of learning. Pupils' contribution to their own, and the wider, community is good and pupils have satisfactory knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has a number of strengths, including the programme of out of school activities and the development of pupils' creativity in art, music and drama. The school has an almost unique partnership with Glyndebourne Opera, which makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' cultural awareness. Indeed, while pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, spiritual and cultural development is good. A task for subject leaders is to make more of the cross-curricular links and use of information and communication technology (ICT) that will further improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in reading and writing. The curriculum for children in Nursery and Reception is good.

Pupils' welfare is well taken care of. The school works in good partnership with others to ensure pupils' needs are met. Academic guidance has improved since the previous inspection and is satisfactory. However, opportunities for pupils to talk in lessons about how well they think they are doing, and teachers' use of comments in marking to show pupils the next step in their work, are inconsistent. There is some very good practice in both, but this has not been shared widely enough.

The many improvements in school are due to the good quality of leadership and management. The school made a slow start to improvement after the previous inspection but once leaders realised the school could not continue to operate in the way it had, the headteacher and senior leaders were resolute that the school would do much better. Systems are now in place to check rigorously that teaching, learning, and pupils' achievement are good enough. Governors have updated their knowledge and skills and are an effective power for improvement. They continually question the school's effectiveness in order to ensure it moves ahead rapidly. School self-evaluation became more honest and accurate with these improvements in leadership. The school has satisfactory capacity to maintain its rate of advance. At present, subject leaders are

still developing their expertise to match the strengths shown by senior leaders. There is, however, recognition amongst all the adults in school that more work has to be completed in order to strengthen the school's effectiveness further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage continued as a strength through the school's period of lowest effectiveness. This was because provision in Nursery and Reception was well led and the quality of teaching and the curriculum was good. This has continued to the present. The children make good progress because their needs are met effectively. The stimulating curriculum provides many opportunities for them to work independently or alongside an adult. Therefore, a good blend of independent investigation and staff led work helps the children build skills and knowledge effectively in all six areas of learning. The children make quicker progress in their work inside the classrooms than they sometimes do when working outside. Activities outside are not always closely enough observed and guided by adults. By the end of Reception most children still have not achieved all their learning goals because they had so many gaps in their learning when they started in Nursery. It is clear, though, that they have added well to their skills and knowledge.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle managers in assisting the school to maintain its improvement.
- Give pupils enough opportunities to assess their own progress and improve teachers' marking to show pupils the next step in their learning.

A small proportion of 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**

Standards are below average when children leave Reception, and pupils in Year 2 are also working at below average levels. In Year 6, standards are currently broadly average. The school has worked successfully to ensure the proportion of pupils working at the expected level matches the proportion found nationally. However, it has yet to make sure enough pupils reach the higher Level 3 in Year 2 and Level 5 in Year 6. The amount of challenge provided for pupils likely to reach this level is improving now, but it is too early for this to have had enough impact.

Achievement in mathematics is accelerating at a faster rate than that in reading and writing. There are, however, some new approaches to teaching reading and writing that are showing a positive influence on pupils' progress.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language share the same satisfactory achievement as the other pupils. Provision for them is improving steadily. The same holds for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Learning is good because pupils have positive attitudes, work hard and collaborate well with others. They are polite and considerate and listen well to their teachers. Behaviour is good on the whole, although in a few lessons some pupils are restless when they have to listen for long periods. There could be more opportunities for pupils to develop independence in working and to take on more responsibility. When given responsibilities, such as helping the youngest children, pupils carry them out with efficiency and enthusiasm. The personal, social and emotional development of children in Nursery and Reception is good.

Pupils' awareness of how to keep healthy and safe is satisfactory. Pupils do not always make healthy choices for their lunch boxes, although the salad bar is popular amongst pupils who take school meals. Most pupils are alert to safety issues and their understanding of environmental issues is good.

Attendance levels have risen well due to the school's innovative approach in encouraging pupils to attend regularly. The use of mobile phone texting to alert parents to their responsibility for their child's regular attendance and good punctuality is working most successfully.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

After a period in 2006 to 2007, when the quality of teaching was beset with problems such as staff absence, inadequate expectations, lack of pace to learning and weaknesses in behaviour management, school leaders took firmer command of the situation and started the process of successful improvement. Now, teaching quality is good in all classes. One of the key strengths is the effective partnership between teachers and teaching assistants in ensuring pupils' work is matched fully to working levels and is challenging enough. Pupils who speak English as an additional language work hard and are as successful as other pupils because their needs are met effectively. Higher attaining pupils, however, are only just beginning to be stretched sufficiently, and work is still occasionally undemanding.

Many lessons sparkle. Classrooms are inviting places to work and display is used to set targets and to share and celebrate good achievement. Pupils have good knowledge of what they are expected to learn and work purposefully to meet their targets. Humour is a very marked aspect of the work. Pupils say their lessons are fun. Teaching is good in Nursery and Reception because it is successful in providing interesting work that enthuses the children. Through the school, though, ICT is not used enough in lessons to help pupils build their knowledge and skills.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 3

The curriculum has been consolidated soundly so it covers all the necessary subjects and assists pupils effectively in their personal, social and health education. The focus on English and mathematics is rightly at the heart of the curriculum. However, cross-curricular links to help pupils improve pupils' basic skills are not fully developed. This is particularly the case for ICT.

The art curriculum is strong and is a particular favourite of the pupils. There are many out of school activities and visits that enhance the work of pupils and contribute to their raised

achievement. The links with local museums, theatres and art galleries are particularly helpful in enriching pupils' experiences and strengthening spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

The curriculum for children in Nursery and Reception is good. There are many fun activities that engage the children in purposeful play and some exciting learning experiences. The recent visit of the fire engine was a high spot for the children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Procedures to safeguard pupils, such as the vetting of staff, are thorough and meet government requirements. Child protection systems are rigorous. The school makes sure that pupils from all backgrounds are able to achieve soundly, including those who do not complete all their primary education at the school. Parents are involved well in the work to improve pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills. Behaviour management is effective and senior leaders refuse to use exclusion as a means of controlling behaviour. Instead, pupils who display challenging behaviour are counselled and supported well so they can return to good learning quickly.

Pupils know their targets for English and mathematics and, increasingly, for science. They do not, however, have consistent opportunities to talk about their own achievement. Marking does not identify what steps each pupil must take to reach their targets. Teaching staff give good encouragement to all pupils and this is reflected in the hard work that pupils show. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are guided well so they make good progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has developed a firm focus on improvement that is shared now by all the staff and governors. The local authority has provided effective support to help the school move ahead and to make sure its priorities are the right ones. Gradually, the local authority has been able to reduce this support, and the school is now taking charge of its own future. School leaders have a reliable understanding of its performance and continue to focus their efforts for improvement on the strengthening of teaching quality, pupils' achievement and standards. The transfer to the new buildings, which was a substantial operation, was managed well.

Improvements are apparent across a broad front of the school's work. Standards are rising well and there is much more security and consistency in the quality of provision. The school has raised expectations of achievement and its targets are challenging. Subject leaders have not yet had the opportunity to check that such targets are met in their areas of responsibility, although the school has reorganised its middle management in readiness for such work and to make its self-evaluation even more rigorous. Given the success with which the school has pursued improvement, it is evident it has satisfactory capacity to strengthen its work even more.

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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?	3
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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

### 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?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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

25 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waterside Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3JS

We enjoyed our visit to your school. We want to thank you for your friendly welcome and the help you gave us in finding out about your work.

We think that your school has improved a lot since you moved into the new buildings. It no longer has the big weaknesses that meant you did not learn as well as you might. It now gives you a satisfactory education.

We found some good things in school.

- You are well taught and your progress is improving quickly.
- You reach average standards.
- Children in Nursery and Reception make good progress.
- Your behaviour is good, you enjoy school and try hard.
- Pupils from all backgrounds work well together.
- There is a lot of fun in your learning and you are keen to join in the out of school activities.
- You are well cared for.
- Mrs Pickin expects you and the staff to do your best at all times.

We have suggested that your teachers make improvements to three things.

- Help more of you reach the higher levels in your work.
- Encourage the teachers who lead each subject to get more involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning.
- Give you more chances to talk about your work and tell you more often how to improve it.

We know you will help your teachers to make these improvements. To start, you could show in your books that you have read the comments your teachers have made. The staff will show you how to do this.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector

25 March 2008

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Lead inspector