

Packmoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123979
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	328024
Inspection date	28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	439
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Mansell
Headteacher	D Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Carr Street Packmoor Stoke-on-Trent ST7 4SP
Telephone number	01782 234544
Fax number	01782 234542

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether all pupils across the school were making at least satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- the effectiveness of initiatives to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of provision
- the success of teachers' marking and the process of setting targets on improving achievement and standards.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, discussions with pupils, parents, staff and governors, analysis of the school's documentation, assessment information and responses to the parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most other primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of full-time Nursery provision for 60 children and two Reception classes. A privately run after-school club is available to the pupils. There has been considerable staff turnover during the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Packmoor provides its pupils with a satisfactory education and it is rapidly improving. A parent was accurate in their description of the school going from 'strength to strength'. Others were generous in their praise for the 'happy learning environment' where 'children are safe and happy'. The headteacher and senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their self-evaluation is accurate and they have identified appropriate priorities that are now leading to improvements in achievement and the quality of provision. Previous inconsistencies in pupils' progress have been eradicated as a result of rigorous monitoring of performance and improvements in the quality of teaching. Senior staff are able to demonstrate a good track record of improvement over the last few terms. There is a good capacity to sustain this and improve the school even further.

By the time they leave school, pupils reach average standards having made satisfactory progress. Historically, standards and achievement have been patchy and following an uneven pattern. Improvements in provision mean that progress across the school is more even. In many instances, pupils are making good progress. For example, the school's challenging targets for the current Year 6 pupils indicate that standards should improve this year. Despite this success, not all pupils do as well with their writing as they do in reading and mathematics. This is particularly an issue for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The proportion of good teaching is steadily improving as a result of challenging targets set by the school to improve teaching quality. This is a positive picture, although currently there is still not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils learn well at all times. Classrooms provide colourful and interesting learning environments. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive so pupils remain motivated and engaged with their learning. In less successful lessons, the pace of learning is not always quick enough for pupils to make consistently good progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in particular, benefit from their support. This enables these pupils to make the same satisfactory progress as their classmates. Children in the EYFS make a sound start to their education overall but good progress in their personal and social development.

Good academic guidance and the effective use of targets is one of the contributory factors that is accelerating pupils' progress and improving standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Unfortunately, this good practice does not yet pervade all of the school and younger pupils are unsure of their targets. The most effective teachers' marking provides supportive comments and clear guidance on how to improve and move to the next stages of learning. However, as with the process of setting targets, high quality guidance through teachers' marking is not found in enough classrooms. Overall, academic guidance is satisfactory. Good attention is paid to pupils' care and well-being. Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements and pupils are very clear about which adults they can go to if they have any concerns or issues they want to discuss. The school has good links with outside agencies, which ensure that pupils who are vulnerable, for whatever reason, are well supported. Attendance, which is good, has improved since the last inspection, an indication of how safe and happy pupils feel at school.

The school is in the process of revitalising its sound curriculum. There are a number of strengths, such as the contribution the curriculum makes to the pupils' personal development and the provision for information and communication technology. It was impressive to see Year 5 and 6 pupils working with their own laptops as they wrote stories or undertook research. The pupils' moral and social development is good and reflected in the way that they get on with each other

and staff so well. Pupils are welcoming, polite and friendly to visitors and work together effectively. They are secure in their knowledge of different religions but less confident in their understanding of people from different ethnic groups or backgrounds. The school is in the process of developing an International Primary Curriculum but there is some way to go before it is fully established and improving the pupils' understanding of the global community. Overall, the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory.

Pupils conduct themselves well, moving round the school safely and sensibly. It is noticeable on entering the school, how calm everywhere is, with pupils working purposefully. They readily discuss their work and other school activities in a polite and mature manner. The school offers a good range of additional activities, and sports clubs are popular because the pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise as well as eating sensibly. They know how to stay safe, confidently explaining the dangers of drugs, for example, or the issues around using the internet inappropriately. With their sound basic skills, confidence and self-assuredness, pupils are ready to face the challenges when they move to a larger secondary school. In the words of one Year 6 pupil, 'We want the best education for our future.'

There is a positive atmosphere around the school and initiatives to bring about improvement are showing success, especially now staffing is more stable. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, as reflected in the pupils' satisfactory achievement. Many subject leaders are new to their posts but are already developing their expertise effectively and starting to contribute to school improvement. Governors are supportive. They have a secure understanding of what the school does well and are realistic about what needs to improve. They are actively involved in self-evaluation and strategic planning but do not review the impact of school policies sufficiently.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory but like the rest of the school, improving quickly. Currently, children start school with standards below the expected levels. They learn steadily but standards are below average on entry to Year 1, especially their language and literacy skills. Children's safety and welfare are promoted well and they work and play in a safe, supportive environment. Parents are very positive about the way in which their children settle into school and complimentary about how the school involves them in their child's education. Children's learning and development are satisfactory. Daily routines are well established and a suitable range of different activities are provided for the children, although more could be made of the outdoor provision. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and enjoy the different and interesting activities they are able to do. Their behaviour is good. They play and work well with each other and follow established routines. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development. At present, assessment procedures are not robust enough to rigorously inform the future planning of activities. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The EYFS manager is knowledgeable and has introduced a number of effective changes to the learning environment and day-to-day practice. They are beginning to have an impact and improve children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress and standards in writing particularly in the lower part of the school.
- Ensure that all teachers' marking provides pupils with guidance on how to improve their work and achieve their targets.

- Increase the pace of learning in less effective lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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**

29 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Packmoor Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4SP

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. It was good to see you in lessons and talk to you about your work and other activities. You go to a satisfactory school which is getting better all the time because the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to improve it.

By the time you leave in Year 6, you have made satisfactory progress and reach the standards that most other children achieve at that age. However, not all of you are doing as well in your writing as you are in reading and mathematics. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to improve the progress you make in writing and the standards you achieve. Teaching is satisfactory and improving steadily. In lessons where the pace of learning is quick, many of you make good progress. We have also asked the school to make sure that the pace of learning is good in all lessons. Talking to Year 6 pupils, it was clear that they had a good understanding of their learning targets and that their teachers' marking is very helpful to them. This is not the case in all classes, so this is another issue we have asked the school to look at.

You behave well at school and enjoy the many different activities you are provided with. It was good to see how enthusiastic you are about your work. You know how important it is to have a healthy lifestyle, especially through taking lots of exercise and eating sensible food. You all get on well with one another and the staff. You work well together, like in the 'phoneme partners' we saw in Year 2, and by yourselves. It was impressive to see the Year 5 and 6 pupils working so hard on their laptops. You and your parents and carers told us that the school looks after you well. We agree. It provides you with a safe, welcoming environment in which to work and play. You can do your bit to help the school improve by continuing to be so enthusiastic about your learning and working hard at your writing.

Best wishes for the future

Chris Kessell

Lead inspector