

Flash Ley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124205
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328078
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Alwyne Jolly

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)	260
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	Helen Veray
Headteacher	Gareth Morris
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hawksmoor Road Stafford ST17 9DR
Telephone number	01785 356642
Fax number	01785 356651

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly larger than average school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is well above average. This includes 10 pupils aged between four and seven who are based in a specific unit for those who have speech or communication difficulties. The school has received Healthy Schools and Sportsmark Awards. Childcare is provided privately both before and after school. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

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 where all pupils make good progress and achieve well. The new headteacher has already made a strong impact and good leadership and management have been instrumental in ensuring that the school is appreciated by its local community. Improvements to the internal and external appearance of the building and a reduction in vandalism have helped to create the school's very positive ethos. Almost all parents are enthusiastic about the school, typified by one comment, 'Flash Ley is a fantastic place to learn.'

A good, well balanced curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities which ensure that pupils enjoy their time at school. As a result, pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. Children receive a secure start in the Nursery due to good leadership and teaching. They make good progress from starting points that are below, and in some cases well below, what is normally expected throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is at its best in the final three years of the main school so that the pupils make striking progress related to their previous attainment and achieve above average standards. Well focused teaching has brought about clear signs of improvement. However, standards remain below average in Years 1 and 2 in the key skills of numeracy and reading. The needs of able pupils are not always met in Years 1 and 2, but there are moves in hand to address this more consistently. In Years 4 to 6, the provision for able pupils is good, ensuring that standards are above average overall.

Relationships are consistently good which helps foster pupils' good personal development and well-being. However, cultural development is less strong. Pupils are insufficiently aware of the multicultural aspects which underpin modern British society. There is an appropriate emphasis on healthy eating and the importance of exercise is borne out by the large number of extra-curricular sports clubs available. There are outstanding links with outside agencies which underpin the good care and guidance provided for pupils. They benefit from constructive advice on how to improve and have time to reflect on teachers' detailed comments. Pupils' contribution to the school and local communities is outstanding.

The provision for the well-above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the specific unit, is consistently good and much appreciated by parents. It supports pupils' good progress.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly since the new headteacher was appointed. On the basis of policies, procedures and planning already in place, it has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good due to a number of factors, including good leadership and careful assessment of children's progress. Children start school with skills below, and some well below, those expected for their age, particularly in language, number and personal development. Good teaching, particularly in the Nursery, aided by a lively and engaging curriculum, is well adapted to individual needs and ensures children make good progress academically and personally, so they are suitably prepared for Year 1. They develop good relationships with each other and with adults and their growing independence enhances their ability to learn. The children are well cared for in a safe and secure environment and gain confidence from it. They are well guided and advised how they can do better. Free movement

is currently restricted from the classroom to the outdoor area but the school has plans to improve the accommodation so that this need is met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and increase progress rates by the end of Year 2 by improving the quality of teaching to develop pupils' understanding of numeracy and early reading skills and increasing the challenge, expectations and support for more able pupils.
- Improve pupils' awareness of life in a multicultural society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall with pupils attaining above average standards by the end of Year 6. Although children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they enter Year 1 with standards just below average. Previous national assessments have reflected below average attainment at the end of Year 2, but the current work and provisional teacher assessments indicate significant improvement, particularly in writing. However, pupils' understanding of numeracy and of sounds and blends for letters remains a weakness. Although standards are average overall at the end of Year 2, not all able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are yet attaining the standards of which they are capable. Progress is steady in Year 3 and accelerates from Year 4 as a result of consistently good teaching and appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. The needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for both within the school and specifically, in the Speech and Language Unit, and they achieve well. The spread of ability in individual year groups varies considerably and currently standards are lower than for previous Year 6 groups. However, there is a consistent pattern of above average standards by pupils when they leave the school. This represents significant overall progress from their below average starting points on entry to the Nursery.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are considerate and respectful, enjoy their learning and behave well. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of sports activities on offer during and after school. They appreciate the healthy meals which are available and are fully aware of the need to be healthy. Attendance levels are satisfactory and improving as a result of the school's strenuous efforts.

Pupils' moral and social development is good. Relationships throughout the school are very good. However, the opportunities for pupils' cultural and spiritual development are insufficiently embedded in the curriculum. As a result, pupils show limited understanding of life in a multicultural society and do not have enough opportunities to reflect on spiritual values.

Pupils feel very safe at school. One said, 'I feel safe surrounded by my friends and adults when I come to school.' Pupils know what to do if they feel uncomfortable or bullied and know when to help each other and when to let an adult sort the problem out. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. They are very keen to take on leadership roles and positions of responsibility within the school. The school council takes an active role in suggesting school improvements and are proud of their influence. The school has made available a sum of money to be spent at the discretion of the council for the benefit of the school and charities. Pupils have organised events to equally match this

investment and also run a stationery shop. These experiences are preparing them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall as a result of good relationships and well-established classroom routines creating a positive environment for learning. Behaviour is good and pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Teaching continues to be most effective in the Nursery and from Years 4 to 6, although there is an improving picture in Year 2. Teachers use questioning effectively, enabling pupils to think about and give reasons for their answers. Teaching assistants are deployed well and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and integrated in most lessons. In Years 1 and 2, however, higher ability pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to ensure they progress well. In the best lessons, teachers use information and communication technology well to support and enhance learning, particularly enabling pupils to use the interactive whiteboards themselves to present their ideas to others. Marking is good overall and particularly so in Years 4 and 5 where pupils consistently receive detailed constructive advice on how they can improve. Pupils regularly have the opportunity to assess their own work and evaluate their progress towards their learning objectives with positive effects on their performance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good curriculum planning, combined with well-targeted additional support, are key factors in most pupils achieving well. Many parents express their appreciation of the provision for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which helps their children to make good progress. There is a good range of enrichment activities, including many sports, curriculum weeks and the introduction of French as a modern foreign language. These all enhance pupils' learning and personal development. The personal, social and health education programme is taught across subjects rather than specifically. This means it is difficult for the school to assess the progress pupils make. Nevertheless, such provision is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is rightly proud of its caring ethos. Adults lead by example with the result that children show care for each other and are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pastoral care is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are robust and vulnerable pupils are well cared for through excellent partnerships with a variety of outside agencies. The school is proactive in ensuring the well-being of vulnerable children so that their families are equally well supported. As a result, many of these children view the school as a safe haven and consequently achieve well. The level of attendance is satisfactory and improving because of rigorous intervention strategies, which have reduced the number of persistent poor attenders. Transition arrangements are thorough. Strong partnerships with local secondary schools enable pupils to be well prepared for their next steps. Academic guidance for the majority of pupils is good. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has brought vitality and a strong sense of purpose to the school. He has quickly gained the enthusiastic support of staff to a shared vision. He has also galvanised interest and strong support from parents. The senior leadership team have complementary strengths which are ensuring the school is moving forward on many fronts. They have an accurate evaluation of the school and have identified the key areas for improvement. School development planning is good and continually improving. It takes full account of the views of parents, staff and governors. The school promotes a strong culture of equal opportunities designed to eliminate discrimination, emphasised by their very successful approach to supporting deaf children and the significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The development of links with the local community has been outstanding, not only with parents, but also the police, local residents and social services, with whom the school has been proactive in ensuring children's needs are met. However, community cohesion is satisfactory rather than good. The school promotes the understanding of faith, ethnicity and culture but there is only limited evidence of pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain. The governors give sound support and are successfully developing their monitoring skills and processes.

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.

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?	1
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Flash Ley Primary School, Stafford, ST17 9DR

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We found you very polite and friendly and enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you really like about your school.

We found Flash Ley to be a good school which is well led and managed. You receive a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and the school works exceptionally well with other agencies to promote your well-being. The teaching and learning in the school is usually good and you have a good curriculum with many interesting extra-curricular activities. You also understand the need for living a healthy life by exercising and eating properly. We were very impressed with the outstanding contribution you make to your school and local community.

We have suggested the following areas that the school needs to improve.

- We have asked the teachers to give more difficult tasks to those of you in Years 1 and 2 who find work easier to ensure you achieve as well as you should. We expect you to respond by working as hard as you can.
- We have also asked the teachers to help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to have a better understanding of number and of sounds and blends for letters.
- We have asked the teachers to help you find out about the range of different multicultural lifestyles in our country.

My best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Alwyne Jolly

Lead inspector