

Gentleshaw Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124210
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328080
Inspection date	30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
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	John Andrews
Headteacher	Susan Winson
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Darlings Lane Gentleshaw Rugeley WS15 4LY
Telephone number	01543 682476
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Gentleshaw Primary is a small school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school has gained the Healthy Schools status, an Inclusive Quality Mark and Green Flag for Eco status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Gentleshaw Primary is an outstanding school. The school is held in high regard by parents because they appreciate what it does for their children. One parent summed this up for many discerning parents: 'I feel this school strikes a very rare balance as it strives for academic progress and the social well-being of its pupils.' Pupils also appreciate how the school helps them and they regard it as 'a fun school'. The school's strong commitment to self-improvement has paid off. It has improved from a 'good and improving school with outstanding features' in its last inspection to an outstanding school, which clearly demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve. On its journey towards excellence, the school has made very good use of a range of partnerships with other schools and agencies locally to improve pupils' learning and their personal development.

Children make excellent progress in Reception and they enter Year 1 with secure average attainment. By the end of Year 2, standards are usually significantly above the national average and by the time they leave the school, high standards are sustained. In 2008, standards were exceptionally high in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The provisional, but incomplete, results for 2009 are close to those achieved in 2008. Overall, the level of performance paints a picture of exceptional progress and achievement from pupils' entry to the time they leave the school. It also represents excellent added value to pupils' learning. This is the case for the different groups of pupils. This trend of high performance is continuing. Much of the success in sustaining this level of performance is a consequence of high quality teaching, regular assessments and the effective tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Even so, pupils' skills in assessing their own work could be further developed. Pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum that caters for the development of basic as well as creative skills. Academic and pastoral support and guidance are outstanding.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and it is reflected in their positive attitudes to work and excellent behaviour. They enjoy being at school and consequently their attendance is above average. They are acutely aware of how to remain healthy and stay safe. Pupils have a strong desire to make a contribution to the local community and show they care for others through raising funds for worthy causes. They willingly recognise the need to look after their local environment and do so. Pupils have an excellent awareness of spiritual, moral and social issues.

The school's undoubted success stems from the outstanding leadership and management provided by the headteacher. The robust use of data and regular monitoring of classroom work contribute to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Wider links are being established and used to strengthen pupils' awareness of multi-faith and multicultural issues as part of the school's contribution to community cohesion. The school fully recognises that it still needs to do more. Governors are very supportive of the school and know their school well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

On entry to Reception, children's skills vary with each cohort because they join from a variety of settings and with different levels of prior learning. Overall, most children enter with levels of skills and knowledge that are close to those expected for their age. Greater variation in skills is often in their mastery of early literacy and numeracy. Due to the outstanding quality of

provision in Reception, all of them achieve extremely well in all areas of learning. Adults provide a wide range of exciting opportunities for children to learn and experiment. These strike the right balance between those initiated by children themselves and those that are led by adults. As a result, children learn to work well with their peers, as well as independently. Relationships with adults are excellent and give children the confidence to take the lead in developing ideas. Adults know the children very well and ensure that their welfare remains at the centre of all planning and organisation. They successfully encourage children to make decisions and think through the consequences of their actions. Regular assessments are made and used very well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Effective induction helps children to settle very quickly into school routines. Communication with parents is very good and they are regularly consulted about their children's progress. Leadership and management are very effective and ensure that provision is kept under regular review. As yet, children do not have a sheltered outdoor area, which means they are unable to use outdoor facilities in all weathers. This need is rightly seen to be a priority and it is being pursued with a sense of urgency.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' skills in assessing their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well from their starting points at the beginning of Reception. Trends over time and results in 2008 show that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. Indeed, in reading and writing in 2008, they were exceptionally high. Similarly at the end of Year 6, pupils achieved exceptionally high standards in English, well above average in science and above average in mathematics. The provisional results for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and the latest Year 6 results in mathematics and science indicate that pupils' performance in 2009 is close to that shown in 2008. Currently, pupils make at least good progress, with a sizeable number making outstanding progress as they move up through the school. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics combined. This very good rate of progress testifies to high expectations. Consequently, the school is able to sustain the recent trend of improvement. Pupils who need additional support with their work are progressing equally well, because the support for them is targeted well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy coming to school enormously and attend school regularly. Their behaviour is excellent and it contributes to their success at school. Pupils say with certainty that bullying is rare and that occasionally there are small arguments, which are always sorted out. If they have any concerns, they are sure there would always be an adult to talk to. They have an excellent understanding of what is needed to live healthily and how to keep themselves safe. The school provides numerous opportunities, in and out of the classroom, for pupils to take on responsibility for routine jobs, a challenge that they rise to very well. Pupils are so confident that they do not hesitate to make suggestions for further improvement in the school's facilities or what the school could do to support others in the community. Excellent social skills and high academic performance in the basic skills prepare pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

As a result of interesting lessons, pupils are engaged in their learning and progress well. Instructions given by teachers are clear and ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers advise pupils on how to assess their own work, but some of them remain insecure in doing so. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and conduct themselves responsibly when working with others or independently. Excellent relationships encourage pupils to express their ideas freely, secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to. Work planned in lessons and that in pupils' books shows that it is well pitched to the different ability and age groups. Even so, very occasionally, the level of challenge could go up a notch, particularly for the pupils in the middle range of ability. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to supporting the progress of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an exciting range of learning opportunities. The breadth of curriculum seen in pupils' books and some excellent displays around the school indicate it is thoughtfully planned to match the full range of capabilities. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are developed very effectively through different subjects. Excellent use is made of the school's own and the local environment to add enjoyment to pupils' learning. Exciting practical opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their basic skills. The school's participation in the local sports partnership successfully extends its provision for physical education. The inclusion of the teaching of German and Spanish successfully brings a European dimension to the curriculum. Regular provision for personal, social and health education makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. Curriculum enrichment is very good and involves an imaginative range of educational visits and visitors which adds to pupils' specialist knowledge and skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral support for pupils is excellent. Parents and pupils alike appreciate the high level of care shown by all adults in the school. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and feel that they are valued. During discussions with inspectors, a pupil illustrated this view by saying, 'Everyone knows everyone... they help each other ... play together, including the new ones.' As staff know pupils very well, they successfully tailor the support they provide to different groups to meet their specific needs. Safeguarding procedures are robust and regularly reviewed. Academic guidance is extremely effective as it takes into account pupils' ongoing progress and the extent to which they are meeting the targets or goals set for them. The school is exceptionally good at keeping track of pupils' progress to ensure that no incident of underachievement goes undetected and untackled. Pupils identified as having special gifts and talents and those who find learning difficult are all supported well with suitable opportunities to succeed. Links with external agencies that are able to provide additional guidance and support for these two groups and others are used well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school has a clear direction which is focused on sustaining high academic performance but without losing sight of pupils' personal development. This excellent balance is struck because of the headteacher's very strong personal commitment to school improvement which is matched by that of the staff. Self-evaluation is extremely thorough and firmly rooted in evidence collected through the monitoring of teaching and learning, analysis of data and through discussions with key players, including pupils. As a result, the school has an accurate view of itself, which enables it to be highly ambitious in setting itself challenging targets to sustain high performance. Links with parents and the local communities are very good and assist the school in promoting community cohesion. Governors are supportive of the school and discharge their responsibilities well. They are extremely well informed as a result of the information the headteacher provides and are now considering ways of gathering more information for themselves.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gentleshaw Primary School, Rugeley WS15 4LY

Thank you all for making us so welcome. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms, watching you working and talking to you about your work and your school. We also had meetings with your teachers and governors. We were very impressed with what we saw. This letter is to tell you what we found out. The best things about your school are as follows:

- You make excellent progress and achieve very high standards because teaching is outstanding in your school.
- You enjoy your lessons because staff make them interesting for you.
- Your behaviour in and around the school is extremely good.
- You enjoy doing jobs round the school and take this responsibility seriously.
- You relate well to other children and adults in the school.
- Adults take very good care of you and you feel safe as a result.
- The care you take of the school environment is impressive.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are committed to making the school even better than it is now.

To improve things further we have asked the governors of the school to do the following:

- Make sure that you learn how to assess your own work so that you have a good idea of how well you are doing before your teachers tell you!

On behalf the team, I send you my best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Krishan Sharma