

Arden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106100
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336617
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Fisher

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 of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr C Gordon
Headteacher	Miss Nicola Haddock
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed 15 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff, the chair of the governing body and a small number of parents. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including improvement plans, records of pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' work in their books and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. The inspection team analysed 50 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the strategies in place to raise attainment in mathematics, particularly at Level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2
- the number of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1
- the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Most pupils are from White British families. A tiny proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is high. The school has appointed a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher since the last inspection. It has gained a number of national awards which recognise its contribution to promoting pupils' health, physical education and environmental awareness. There is before- and after-school childcare provision which is subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils readily accept and enjoy the many opportunities that they are given to demonstrate independence, to take responsibility and to cooperate in learning. There is a calm, positive atmosphere throughout. Pupils know that they are valued by staff and they respond by demonstrating outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school.

From starting points that are generally below those typical of three-year-olds, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, this results in pupils' attainment in national tests being broadly average, though it is often better in English and science. The percentage of more able pupils who attain at the higher level at the end of each key stage is below average overall in Key Stage 1 and below average in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The adults work well together to provide an engaging variety of stimulating activities. However, there is insufficient analysis of the assessments made of children's progress to enable staff to plan appropriate learning activities and the opportunities for children to learn and play outdoors are limited.

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They eat healthily, talk knowledgeably about health issues and enjoy taking part in the wide range of physical exercise activities that the school provides. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respond very positively to new experiences, and in lessons and assemblies they demonstrate the ability to reflect thoughtfully on issues. The leadership of the school is good. Though a small number of their self-evaluation judgements have been over-generous, leaders' view of the school's strengths and areas for development is broadly accurate. Leaders have been effective in making and sustaining improvements and, at all levels, they monitor provision and track pupils' progress systematically, producing well-targeted plans for continuous improvement. Staff and governors have a strong, shared commitment to the school and its further development. This demonstrates the school's good and strengthening capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment throughout the school, by:

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- ensuring that lessons have a sharp focus on meeting the needs of the more able pupils.
- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - using accurate analyses of children's assessments to plan learning at appropriate levels
 - making better use of the school's outdoor areas to promote effective learning across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils throughout the school show great interest and work industriously in lessons. As a result, they make good progress. They follow instructions readily and respond quickly and enthusiastically when asked to work together. They concentrate well when not directly supervised by an adult. Most work carefully and demonstrate the ability to edit and improve their work, as in a Year 6 lesson where pupils used descriptive language to produce imaginative narratives about a visit to St Lucia. Work in pupils' books is presented well and by the end of Year 6 pupils write legibly, with accurate spelling and punctuation. They are becoming increasingly adept at problem solving, particularly in mathematics and science. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points, though the more able pupils in each key stage do not always achieve as well as they can. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in each key stage as a result of well targeted support and a high regard for their well-being. Pupils' art work is of a high standard and there are many eye-catching, high quality displays of their art in classrooms and around the school.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding throughout the school and as a result, the school is happy and harmonious. Pupils take their school-wide responsibilities very seriously, such as being members of the school council, the environment committee and as junior play leaders. Pupils have good awareness of how to keep safe and an outstanding appreciation of the importance of being healthy. Year 5 and 6 pupils particularly enjoy leading the 'Wake Up, Shake Up' programme of physical activity that begins the school day each week and there is a good take-up of extra-curricular activities such as rhythmic gymnastics, cheerleading and tag rugby.

Pupils' ability to work independently, in pairs and in small groups means that in this respect they are well prepared for the next stages of their education. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills well in 'real life' contexts, such as in the Reception class 'Garden Centre', though pupils do not routinely apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good across the school and this, together with the good use of assessment information by teachers, ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning. In most lessons, teachers clearly explain to their pupils what is expected of them in terms of what they will be learning and how they will be working. Teachers often use ICT very well to help pupils understand what they have to do, as in a Year 4 mathematics lesson on finding areas of rectilinear shapes. Teachers take good account of assessment information in planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, it is used effectively to enable the school to deploy non-teaching staff to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to enable these pupils to participate fully in lessons. In the best lessons, the more able pupils are set challenges and expected to work independently to solve problems, as in a Year 6 mathematic lesson on calculating percentages. However, planning to more precisely meet their needs was seen as the exception rather than as a routine part of planning and teaching. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and this enables them to develop their thinking, speaking and social skills well.

The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' interest and engagement. As well as good basic skills, it provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their talents in art, physical education, music and drama. It promotes their wider interests through themed weeks and a good programme of extra-curricular activities, visits to places of interest and visitors to the schools. The recently established 'tools for thinking' programme is having a positive impact on improving of pupils' social and communication skills.

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive is carefully planned and meets their

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individual needs effectively. Staff know the pupils well, encourage them to take responsibility and expect them to look after themselves and each other. School assemblies and a programme of personal and social development promote pupils' well-being positively. Good links with external agencies help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are properly cared for and make good progress. The school's arrangements for the transfer of pupils to local secondary schools are effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led. The relatively new leadership team has a shared vision to provide a happy, caring and safe environment where positive attitudes are fostered and where pupils develop their potential. Leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. They know what needs to be done to improve it further and are committed to doing so.

The governing body has ensured that all statutory duties are met and that pupils are securely safeguarded. Relationships with parents and carers are good and they speak highly of the school. Partnerships with other schools, local authority agencies and voluntary organisations are good and make a positive contribution to the achievements of the pupils. The school tackles all forms of discrimination effectively. Because the needs of the more able pupils are not fully met, equality of opportunity is judged to be satisfactory. School leaders and governors have successfully placed a strong emphasis on the development of the school as a cohesive community and the school has a high profile locally. The school curriculum includes the study of peoples and countries around the world and the school is developing a formal link with an inner-city primary school whose pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds in order to give pupils a better understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity. The school deploys its resources effectively to achieve good outcomes for pupils and good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning and they make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The early identification of children with special educational needs and/or difficulties leads to them receiving good support and making good progress. Children are cared for well and feel happy and secure as a result. They enjoy school, readily follow instructions from adults, and cooperate and play with each other very well. Their behaviour is outstanding.

Staff are very good role models for children. They provide a calm environment, have established routines that enable children to develop their self-confidence and provide a good range of opportunities for children to play and explore. In addition, staff ensure that there is targeted teaching of groups of children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. There are good cross-curricular links and a range of well organised and easily accessible resources. For example, role play areas are used well, in one case with the adult modelling language very effectively as the 'nurse'. Other than for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, self-evaluation has not placed sufficient emphasis on the analysis of the assessments made of children's progress to enable staff to plan learning activities at appropriate levels, and in particular for the more able children.

When children are outdoors, the opportunities provided for them to learn and play are of good quality. However, leadership does not provide children with sufficient time or a broad and balanced enough range of activities to meet their needs to learn and play and be physically active outdoors.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of families responded to the parental questionnaires. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. They were particularly positive about the approachability and helpfulness of school staff, the care that the school provides and about the range of activities that their children enjoy. Inspection findings support these views. A very small number believed that behaviour was not well managed. Inspectors saw outstanding behaviour on a consistent basis and any minor disruptions were managed very well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Arden Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 370 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	66	17	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	70	15	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	64	17	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	62	13	26	4	8	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	33	66	16	32	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	68	15	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	58	20	40	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	56	16	32	2	4	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	66	16	32	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	48	22	44	0	0	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	50	22	44	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	64	16	32	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	72	11	22	3	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arden Primary School, Stockport, SK6 2EX

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school on 21 and 22 April. We were very impressed by your behaviour and with the polite way that you spoke to us. You made it clear to us that you enjoy your lessons, taking part in extra-curricular activities and carrying out your roles of responsibility properly, such as being school council members.

Arden Primary School is a good school and you have played your part in making it so, well done!

Here are some of the reasons why we have judged your school to be good:

- you make good progress in your learning
- your behaviour is outstanding
- you know how to live healthily
- you work well on your own and together
- good teaching and the curriculum keep you interested
- your school has good leaders.

I have asked your teachers and governors to make two changes to make your school even better. These are:

- to ensure that in lessons the activities given to you are more closely matched to your abilities, especially for those of you who can cope with more challenging tasks
- to make better use of the school's outdoor areas to improve learning for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher

Lead Inspector

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