

Carmountside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123991
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	340467
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Wragg
Headteacher	Mr Philip McLauchlan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woodhead Road Abbey Hulton Stoke-on-Trent ST2 8DJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, teachers' plans, records of pupils' progress and the school improvement plan as well as 13 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 and of boys across the school
- attainment in English
- provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of management actions in bringing about improvements.

Information about the school

Carmountside is a smaller than average primary school serving an estate of mainly social housing on the north east side of the city. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and a higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year.

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

Parents agree with the inspectors that this is a good school. One parent reported 'The headteacher and staff do all they can, not only to teach my children but to make sure that their experiences at school are pleasurable and safe.' Pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school because of interesting lessons and the wide range of additional activities and sports on offer.

Pupils make good progress overall and attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive good support.

Self-evaluation is accurate and is used well to move the school forward. The headteacher has brought about many improvements to the accommodation and the learning environment in just over a year. Previous weaknesses in attainment in Key Stage 1 and the achievement of boys throughout the school have been successfully addressed through improvements in teaching, resources and assessment procedures. The headteacher is ably supported by middle managers who have successfully led developments in assessment, reading, the achievement of boys and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All this indicates a good capacity to improve further. However, some middle managers have too many areas of responsibility to reasonably manage and this can reduce their effectiveness.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good. The school is emerging from a period of considerable, unavoidable disruption in staffing in the Reception class. Current staff are seeking to develop secure assessments of children's progress so that they can plan work to suit the needs of different groups. The use of the secure outdoor area to enhance learning is at an early stage of development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - assessing children' progress systematically in the Reception Year and using the information to plan appropriate work for individuals and groups
 - developing the use of the outdoor area to enhance learning.
- Review the roles of middle managers so that responsibilities are more equitably distributed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

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

Pupils are interested in lessons and try hard to succeed. They are always keen to answer questions and share their ideas. Listening skills are well developed and pupils cooperate well with each other. Children enter the school with a range of skills that overall are below and occasionally well below what could be expected for their age. They enjoy their lessons, make good progress and attain standards that are broadly average when they leave school. This represents good achievement. Standards have been consistently below average at the end of Year 2 for several years. However, the school's assessments show that pupils currently in Year 2 are working at levels that are broadly average, reflecting the impact of improvements in teaching and assessment procedures. Boys have achieved less well than girls for some time. Assessments for boys currently in Year 2 and Year 6 indicate that improved resources and strategies to engage boys in their learning have been effective in closing the gap.

Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that a teacher will help them if they have a problem. They are keen to pursue healthy lifestyles, applying their knowledge of healthy eating and participating eagerly in activities such as rowing. Pupils are polite, positive and welcoming and behaviour is good. They value their school community and take their responsibilities as school councillors and monitors seriously. They appreciate that adults listen to their views and many of their ideas have been incorporated into school improvements. They have sound basic skills and have many opportunities to cooperate in groups and this prepares them well for the future. Pupils are responding positively to the school's efforts and attendance is now similar to the national average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are gaining a good awareness of other cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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

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	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2 3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and so pupils learn well. They respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and this makes a good contribution to their learning in lessons. Lessons are interesting, explanations are clear so pupils are keen to get on with their tasks. The skilled learning assistants are well informed and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The school is developing good systems for assessing pupils' progress and these are being used well in some classes to plan work for different groups. This has been particularly effective in raising attainment in Key Stage 1 and this good practice is now being adopted across the school.

The curriculum is organised well and there is an effective focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills for all pupils. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance learning in other subjects. There are some opportunities for using and developing literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects though this is a developing area. Imaginative projects with other schools are helping to improve pupils' awareness of different cultures. The school is successful in a wide range of competitive sports, which promotes pupils' enjoyment, self-esteem and pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

The school places great importance on the care, guidance and support it provides and pupils regard it as a welcoming and happy place to be. One parent described how, with the care and support of the school, her daughter 'has grown from a shy, frightened child to a happy and confident one...!' Pupils experiencing learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and are given good support so they achieve well. The learning mentor and the home school links worker provide valued support for pupils and their families. The school has good links with other professionals to access specialist support when needed. The school has taken many steps to improve attendance to some effect but is exploring ways to improve attendance further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2 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?

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

The enthusiasm of the headteacher is a major factor in driving improvements in the learning environment and achievement. Staff and pupils appreciate how much he has taken their ideas and views into account. The school is successfully promoting equal opportunities for all its pupils, for example, by closing the gap between boys' and girls' achievement. New systems for assessing pupils' progress have been introduced in some classes where they are helping to accelerate progress and these are now being introduced through the school. The headteacher is supported well by middle managers, particularly in leading improvements in Key Stage 1, assessment and in provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, leadership and management responsibilities are not distributed evenly. For example, the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is combined with the management of several other key areas making it more difficult to manage the period of disruption in staffing in Reception.

The chair of governors is closely involved in the work of the school and is seeking to extend the involvement of other governors. The courses organised by the school are well attended by parents and this helps them to engage well with their children's learning. The school has developed good partnerships with other agencies, including many sports organisations, to enhance pupils' learning and well-being.

The school has all the required procedures for safeguarding pupils securely in place. Staff are well trained and there is extensive provision in the personal, social and health education programme to educate pupils in keeping themselves safe.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It has established links with a school that has pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and faiths to help pupils to understand and appreciate other cultures. Pupils have worked hard in the community garden to grow vegetables which are then sold, strengthening links with the local community.

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
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with skills that are lower than the expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress but nevertheless attainment is below average by the time they enter Year 1.

Children gain in confidence in the calm, welcoming atmosphere in the Nursery and quickly become accustomed to rules and routines. At the time of the inspection there had been unavoidable disruptions to staffing in the Reception class and children were unsure of some routines and expectations. However, the situation is now stable and the new teacher is establishing clear rules for children to follow. Children are beginning to understand how to keep healthy as they enjoy a healthy snack. They are responding well to regular reminders to wash their hands. They feel safe and are confident in approaching an adult for help. Teachers plan a suitable range of activities and there is a sound balance between those led by an adult and those which children choose. Activities to enhance learning outdoors are at an early stage of development compared with those indoors. There is a strong emphasis on talking to children, whatever the activity, to develop children's language skills and the teaching assistants are making a good contribution to children's learning. There are good procedures for assessing children's progress in the Nursery, and the staff in the Reception class are working hard to assess children's knowledge and understanding so that the information can be used to plan work for different groups.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has a sound overview of the Early Years Foundation Stage though there is a need for managers to develop closer contact on a day-to-day basis. There are good procedures for introducing children to school, including home visits, and so they settle quickly. All procedures for ensuring children's safety and well-being are in place.

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

Only a small number of questionnaires were returned. These parents are very happy with all the school has to offer. The inspectors agree with parents that the school

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provides a good standard of education and looks after their children well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Carmountside 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 inspector received 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	92	1	8	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	62	5	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	62	5	38	0	0	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)	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	69	4	31	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



14 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carmountside Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST2 8DJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You are rightly proud of the contribution you have made to planning improvements to the accommodation. A lot seems to have happened in your school in the past year. I know you are enjoying all the new books and this is helping you to improve your reading. We were sorry that we could not look at your work in the Community Garden, but of course it was covered in snow when we visited you.

We agree with you and your parents that Carmountside is a good school which provides a good education and takes good care of you all. You make good progress in school and most of you are working at the level expected for your age by the time you go to High School. You play your part by working hard in lessons and behaving well. I hope that you continue to try hard to get to school every day. You told us you feel safe and know that there is an adult you can talk to if you need help. We were impressed by how successful you have been in sporting competitions. The indoor rowing looked good fun as well as helping you to stay healthy.

When we visit a school it is part of our job to suggest ways in which even a good school could be better. We have asked the school to:

- improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the use of the outdoor area
- look at how many extra jobs each teacher has to do so that nobody has too many.

Thank you once again for your help and courtesy.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead inspector

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