

# Forest Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123997
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	340470
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Straw

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs D Mackie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Baggaley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Woodall Street Waterloo Road Hanley ST1 5ED
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<b>Email address</b>	forestpark@sgfl.org.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at 142 parent, 121 pupil and 30 staff questionnaires. Inspectors also looked through school and subject improvement plans; school policies and procedures; and information about pupils' current performance.

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

- the attainment and progress of pupils in English, particularly in writing, to judge whether the school's strategies are raising standards
- the attainment and progress made by all groups, and especially boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils whose first language is not English, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and matched to the needs of all pupils
- the quality of the curriculum to see whether it is promoting better communication skills and inclusivity
- whether all leaders and managers are accurately monitoring progress and contributing to school improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Two-thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Over half of these are at an early stage of learning English. Many others are pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive a free school meal is very high. A high proportion of pupils is identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Pupil mobility is very high: many pupils join and leave the school at times other than the start and end of the school year.

The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality mark, ECO schools silver award, Stoke Speaks Out quality award and Creative Partnership change schools status.

**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

Forest Park is a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. These include the excellent support, care and guidance for pupils and an outstanding range of partnerships and initiatives which enhance and promote pupils' learning and well-being. This is a highly inclusive school in which children, who between them speak 27 different languages, learn, work and play together in harmony alongside others from different backgrounds and abilities. The headteacher's ambitious vision is firmly embedded in the school and shared by all the adults who work as a team. Everyone is involved in trying to bring about the school's motto of 'be the best you can be'. Social, language and economic barriers to pupils' learning are systematically broken down and tackled. Parents are welcomed into school and encouraged to learn alongside their children. The school lies at the heart of the community and its work has a positive impact on families and children.

Pupils achieve well from often very low starting points. High quality support and well managed provision ensure that all pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those new to learning English and those who join the school at different times make good progress. Teaching, learning and assessment are good, but teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to improve their work. Some pupils do not know the levels at which they are working or how to reach the next level. Progress is consistently good in mathematics and science, but slower in English and especially in writing. The increasingly creative curriculum enhances enjoyment, broadens pupils' understanding of the world around them and provides numerous opportunities for speaking, listening and singing. This is a language rich school and a creative and vibrant community where pupils enjoy their education.

The senior leadership team, under the inspiring leadership of the headteacher, has worked tirelessly to address matters raised at the last inspection and to make what was then a satisfactory school into a good one. Subject leaders have acquired the experience and skills to take the actions necessary to raise standards in their subjects. Governors are fully involved in the school's progress and provide good support and act as a critical friend to help it to improve further. The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and has clear, well thought through priorities for how to improve standards further. These factors show why the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Improve pupils' attainment and achievement in writing by:
  - ensuring the quality of marking is consistent across the school and sharing the good practice which already exists
  - ensuring pupils fully understand the levels at which they are working and how to reach the next level.

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

Pupils, including the many with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress from low starting points. Over the past three years, pupils at the end of Year 6 have achieved better results than might have been expected. Standards are in line with the national average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. The school had identified a difference between the performance of girls and boys and interventions have closed the gap successfully. Detailed records show that pupils across the school make good progress. Pupils new to learning English make very good progress in their acquisition of the language. They rapidly develop comprehension and speaking skills and are keen to answer questions. The school has many strategies in place to improve standards overall in English, particularly in writing, and current records suggest they are slowly having an impact. Improvements in mathematics are already evident. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn, participate enthusiastically in all discussions and work hard. Pupils sometimes know the targets they are working towards, but few pupils know the levels at which they are working and so do not have a clear idea of how to improve and reach the next level.

Pupils' personal and social development is good. In every classroom a culture exists where pupils' and adults' contributions are valued. Every classroom door tells visitors which different languages are spoken in that room. In classroom circle time activities, pupils learn to reflect on sensitive issues. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities in school, such as serving on the school council, acting as playground leaders, working in the gardening club or as members of the ECO club. They enjoy fundraising activities for their local area and beyond and support international charities. Pupils take safety issues seriously. They know the procedures for safe play outdoors and how to use the internet safely. Bullying is rare and, if it occurs, pupils say it is dealt with promptly by the school. They are proud of the school's approach to healthy eating and speak enthusiastically about the food at school. They are especially proud of the fact that the produce from the gardening club is sometimes used in lessons. Behaviour is good and in some lessons outstanding. Pupils know what is expected of them and lessons run smoothly. At playtime, activities can be boisterous, but the playground leaders are always there to keep an eye on what is going on and to organise games or quiet activities for everyone.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teachers plan interesting and enjoyable lessons which engage the pupils and motivate them to learn. Teachers use cross-curricular themes well to enhance learning and enjoyment. For example, in English, pupils were writing their own diaries imagining what life would be like as a child working in a Victorian mill. All staff convey a love of learning and encourage pupils to talk as much as they can, and often to sing in lessons, as a way of engaging them in as much spoken communication as possible. Teachers have good subject knowledge and try to make learning as relevant as possible for pupils and to match the learning to individual needs. Pupils newly arrived in school, and often newly arrived in the country, use information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms at first, so that they are able to take part at their own pace. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Some teachers give excellent advice and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, but this is not the case across the school.

Pupils enjoy the curriculum provided for them at school. 'Lessons are fun' was a frequent comment from pupils. Activities are planned to take account of the full range of abilities and for those who speak English as an additional language. The curriculum is well organised with a strong focus on promoting the spoken word. The school prides itself, with good reason, on the quality of its music and singing, activities enjoyed thoroughly by all pupils. The Creative Partnerships the school has ensure that pupils often have the chance to work with artists and the results of their collaboration are evident in the wonderful displays in every communal area. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, but these are not always as well attended as the school would

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like. Some parents prefer their children to come straight home at the end of the day. The school's consistent approach to supporting pupils' personal development helps them to make good progress. They are encouraged to think about their own well-being as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and to learn about cultures other than their own.

Pastoral care and support for pupils is outstanding. Staff work closely with parents wherever possible so that the needs of each pupil are understood thoroughly. This is a key factor in the good progress made by the high proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English. Teaching assistants are involved effectively with every class. They are highly skilled in responding to pupils' needs so that they remain fully included in class activities. They balance compassion with clear direction and pupils feel valued and understood. The school's strategies to promote attendance are effective. There has been a gradual improvement in attendance over the past three years. Very good transition arrangements ensure pupils move smoothly through the school until they transfer to secondary school. Pupils feel safe, have great confidence in the adults around them and enjoy being at school. A culture of praise and awards ensures that pupils gain in self-confidence and feel valued.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

There is a shared vision for improvement among all the adults who work in the school. Staff enjoy good working relationships and the trust of the pupils in their care. An exemplary tracking system is gradually being put into place which allows the school to monitor closely the progress of every child. Subject leaders are held accountable for standards and achievement in their areas. There is a strong commitment to staff development and adults are keen to share good practice and to build on the success they have achieved already. All staff feel they are involved in decision-making. One teacher summed this up in a comment typical of many, 'together we are empowering each other to achieve better outcomes for our children'.

There is full equality of opportunity for every pupil and barriers to learning are broken down. Excellent links have been made with the local community and the school works hard to involve parents, to welcome them into school and to make them comfortable partners in their children's education. Regular adult learning classes take place, even though the school is short of space and urgently needs a bigger community room.

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Building on this project is set to start in January. Links are good with communities in other countries and a video-conferencing network with two schools in Africa is being developed.

Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary and result in improving outcomes for many pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable. Policies and other documentation include additional checks and records beyond statutory requirements. The school engages with a wide range of other agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. All staff are trained regularly in aspects of child protection. Governors are involved at all levels to ensure that systems are robust and effective. The site has a high level of security to ensure the safety of everyone in school.

Governors are kept well informed about all matters and have a very clear picture of strengths and weaknesses. A number of governors are come into school regularly and make a very positive contribution. The school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children start the Nursery class with skills and abilities well below what is typical for their age. Some of the children speak virtually no English when they start school. Good teaching, the expert guidance of bilingual assistants and a stimulating learning environment ensure that children settle quickly, develop confidence and social skills and begin to enjoy investigating the world around them. As their language skills improve, children become active and curious learners. The children feel safe, trust the adults around them and behave very well. When they enter Year 1, the children have made



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good progress but have not yet reached some of the early learning goals set for them. The good work done to promote their personal development and language skills means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

A very strong and effective team of adults work well together. Planning is good and is based on careful and thorough assessment of each child's needs and their small steps in progress. Individual assessments feed into the school's tracking system so that all staff have a clear idea of each child's progress and needs. The vibrant and stimulating environment provides a wealth of opportunities for children to investigate, play, exercise and enjoy their learning. This is an exciting place for children to be. There is a good mixture of teacher-led activities and occasions when children can make their own choices. Children laugh, talk and sing together and learn to share and enjoy each other's company. Teachers encourage children's development by making challenging tasks fun so that everyone wants to join in and do their best. Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed by teachers not using questions enough to engage children fully in what they are doing. Staff constantly praise good behaviour and talk about feelings.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. After careful induction, the school's continued communication with parents ensures they are strong partners in their children's learning. The welfare of each child is paramount in all planning and there is consistency of approach and practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

The very great majority of parents are highly satisfied with the education their children receive. There were many comments praising the teachers and other staff for their enthusiasm and commitment and willingness to provide many extra activities in addition to lessons. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities were especially positive, as were the parents of the youngest children who spoke warmly about the atmosphere and welcome in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour and wanted more challenging work for their children. Inspectors judged behaviour overall to be good and found little evidence of lack of challenge in lessons.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Forest Park 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 410 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	55	64	44	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	56	61	42	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	51	65	45	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	46	69	48	7	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	46	75	52	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	42	77	53	2	1	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	40	77	53	5	3	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)	56	39	75	52	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	40	71	49	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	35	78	54	7	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	35	71	49	11	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	56	39	74	51	7	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	48	68	47	2	1	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



9th November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forest Park Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent. ST1 5ED

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave my colleagues and I when we visited you in school last week. We really enjoyed our visit and the conversations we had with you. We loved your wonderful singing in assembly and in 'the big sing' on Friday morning. As you know, we came to see how well your school is doing and how you are getting on with your learning.

We found that you are being given a good education. You go to a good school and you are achieving well. Many of you are new to learning English and some of you have learning difficulties, but you all make good progress and reach average standards in mathematics and science and just below average in English. Your teachers work hard to make sure you enjoy lessons and that you have all the support you need. The curriculum is interesting and creative. We were very impressed by the lovely art work on the walls and corridors and the way in which subjects are studied together to make interesting topics. You make good progress in your learning about how to be fit, safe and healthy. The school is well led and all the staff are always looking out for ways to make it even better. The adults in school take excellent care of you and try to help you to 'be the best you can be'.

To help make the school even better we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that when your work is marked you receive good advice on how to improve it
- make sure you know the levels you are working at and how to reach the next level. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and listening to your teachers' good advice.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Judith Straw

Lead inspector

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