

Gladstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124031
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	340479
Inspection dates	3–4 February 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Brown
Headteacher	Mrs E Preston
Date of previous school inspection	3 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observed 13 teachers and spent approximately 55% of inspection time looking at learning. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, teachers' plans, pupils' individual education plans, records of assessment of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, reports from the school's improvement partner and examined 209 questionnaires completed by parents.

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

- whether attainment is high enough
- whether different groups of pupils are making sufficient progress and achieving as well as they can
- how effectively the school is working with parents and other partners
- the effectiveness of school's actions in bringing about improvements
- the quality of learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Gladstone Primary is a larger than average school. It had operated from two sites more than half a mile apart following the merger of an infant and a junior school in 2004. All pupils moved into a new, purpose built school on the site of the old junior school in September 2009. The landscaping of the grounds, including the outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is almost completed. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background. More than a third have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a much larger proportion of pupils than is usual are entitled to free school meals.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Senior staff and governors have worked tirelessly over several years to mitigate the effects of operating on two sites. Pupils and staff are now benefiting from being together in high quality accommodation and there are positive signs that this is beginning to impact on learning and that outcomes are improving.

After two years of low attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, successful management strategies to improve teaching and the curriculum have resulted in improved results in 2009, particularly in English. Extended opportunities for writing in other subjects and good quality marking have helped to improve standards in English. Attainment was broadly average, and pupils made good progress from a low starting point. Attainment in mathematics also improved but was still below average. Scrutiny of the books of pupils now in Year 6 indicates that this improvement is being maintained. Opportunities to develop skills across the curriculum and the quality of marking are not so well developed in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. They receive effective support in class and in small groups to help them make good progress. The school works closely with other professionals to provide specialist support where needed. Links between home and school are good and are now having an impact on improved attendance and pupils' well-being. Pupils take many responsibilities in contributing to school life and this is now extending to the local community. However, pupils have a limited understanding of other communities further afield or of different cultures or faiths.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and they make good progress in Nursery and Reception. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage has not yet been organised to maximise the benefits for learning of the new accommodation by providing opportunities for Nursery and Reception children and staff to work together for some activities.

The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders are leading to improvements. Those seen in the provision and attainment, particularly in English, show a satisfactory capacity to improve. Leaders are now focused on sustaining these improvements and developing strategies to raise achievement in mathematics throughout the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by:

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- improving the quality of marking to match that in English
- giving pupils more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects and in solving problems in mathematics lessons
- developing pupils' understanding of mathematical language.
- Extend learning for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception to work together.
- Provide more opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society.
- Approximately 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils are very proud of their new school and the fact that some of their ideas have been used in the building. They say how much they are enjoying their learning in the new surroundings. Most lessons are interesting and practical so pupils are keen to be involved, for example when improvising a drama before writing a play script. After several years of consistently low standards at the end of Key Stage 1, including 2009, some improvement is evident in the work of the current Year 2. The school has put in place several strategies to improve the attainment of boys and this is beginning to have some impact, for example in writing. Across the school the stronger teaching is accelerating pupils' progress and as a result attainment is rising. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive good support to help them to learn.

Pupils say they feel safe and they appreciate the security the new building affords. They are clear about who to turn to should they have a problem. Behaviour is good and improves through the school as pupils mature and acquire the language to resolve their differences. Pupils show a sound awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They play an active role in the school community with many responsibilities such as monitors and school councillors, and their contribution to the wider community is developing. Pupils are now developing their satisfactory basic skills and their attendance is broadly average. This is a suitable preparation for the future.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show concern for other people's feelings and have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. However, they have a limited understanding of other cultures and faiths.

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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned and teachers use information from assessments effectively to ensure that there is a good level of challenge and support for pupils of different abilities. Teachers make good use of resources to engage pupils and so they are well motivated and sustain interest in their learning. There is a good rapport between adults and pupils which makes learning fun and encourages pupils to work hard. Teachers gain a good knowledge of individual progress by involving pupils in checking their own and others' progress. The marking of work in English is thorough and pupils say that this helps them to improve their work. The marking of work in mathematics is not so well developed. The skilled support assistants are well deployed and they make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well. The variety of opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects has been a strong factor in improving writing skills. Similar opportunities for using and developing numeracy skills across the curriculum are not so advanced. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Their individual plans are carefully crafted to meet specific needs and help teachers to keep a check on their progress. There is a good range of additional activities to enrich pupils' learning and make it more meaningful, and visits and visitors add interest to work on topics. Sporting opportunities are very popular with pupils but they say they would also like more non-sporting activities after school. Provision for pupils' personal development is well established, helping pupils to make choices about their own well-being.

There is overwhelming agreement amongst parents that their children are well cared for

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and the school works hard to ensure this is so. Care for the most vulnerable is at times exceptional. The support for pupils and families opens opportunities for learning and secures positive relationships between home and school. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, not least because of the school's support for families. The school works well with a variety of other professionals to provide good support for pupils, whatever their needs. Pupils are given good guidance about how to protect themselves, stay safe and make informed choices about their well-being, for example through work with Crucial Crew.

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 drive and ambition of the headteacher and the commitment and perseverance of the governing body have helped to secure a successful move into the impressive new building. Careful monitoring and evaluation of the school's work have been used to bring about improvements in teaching and the curriculum, particularly in English. These are now beginning to have an impact on attainment, but the school is aware that these improvements need to be sustained and extended. The headteacher is ably supported by a knowledgeable and forward thinking deputy headteacher who has made a valuable contribution to the running of the school on different sites and to recent improvements. There have been some unavoidable disruptions in the work of the middle managers in developing their leadership roles but this is now being addressed. Governors are a well informed presence in school. They are keen to support the headteacher in the continuous evaluation of the school's work to ensure a sustained improvement in standards.

The school has worked successfully to engage parents and links between home and school are good. The exchanges in the home/school diaries show a well used line of communication. There are productive partnerships with schools, colleges and local businesses to open up learning opportunities for pupils. Promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The school identified a gap between the attainment of boys and girls and the actions taken are beginning to take effect. It is now looking to identify any differences in achievement between different groups. The school meets its duties and requirements in safeguarding pupils, and staff have been suitably trained.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is developing good links with the local community and is keen to share the new facilities. Links with the wider community in

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the city and beyond are at an early stage of development. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with a range of skills that are generally well below what could be expected for their age, particularly their language and social skills. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but nevertheless children's attainment is below average when they enter Year 1 and language skills are still weak.

Staff plan a good range of purposeful, practical activities that show understanding of how young children learn. Because there is an appropriate balance between those activities led by an adult and those which children choose for themselves, children learn to develop independence. Letter sounds are taught systematically so children are making good progress in reading. Staff are making good use of the limited outdoor area to extend learning until the new outdoor area is completed. Adults take every opportunity to talk to children, whatever the activity, and this is helping to develop their language and counting skills.

Children feel safe in the secure environment and relate well to their key worker. They respond well to the regular reminders to wash their hands, for example when making sandwiches. They make a good contribution in class as they take turns to be helpers. There are good procedures for introducing children to school, including home visits, so they settle quickly. There is good communication between staff and parents, who are welcome in school.

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Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are good systems for assessing and recording children's progress and these are used well to plan work for different groups. Teachers in the Nursery and in the Reception plan well for their own year group but planning is not coordinated to ensure continuity across the Foundation Stage. The staff have worked successfully to provide a stimulating learning environment in their rooms. However, there are missed opportunities to extend learning even further by sometimes opening the doors between Nursery and Reception. Some joint activities would help to promote language and social skills and ease the transition between Nursery and Reception.

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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the many parents who returned the questionnaires are happy with what the school provides. We agree with parents that the school keeps them well informed and listens to their suggestions and concerns. A small number expressed concern about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. However, inspectors found that the school deals with any misbehaviour well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gladstone 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 209 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 396 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	143	68	61	29	3	1	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	144	69	62	30	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	120	57	85	40	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	127	60	81	39	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	134	64	74	35	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	129	61	73	35	4	2	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	115	55	89	42	4	2	2	1
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)	93	44	100	48	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	125	60	80	38	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	104	50	87	41	12	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	103	49	95	45	6	3	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	117	56	85	40	3	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	147	70	57	27	4	2	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.



5 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gladstone Primary, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 5EW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your beautiful new school. We can understand why you are so proud of it and of your suggestions about the building. Yours is a satisfactory school which means there are many good things about it and also some things which could be better.

We agree with you and your parents that the school takes good care of you all and there is always someone to give you help when you need it. You play your part by working hard and behaving well.

Teachers spend a lot of time marking your work, particularly in literacy, and they give you a lot of guidance about how you can improve. This is helping you to make good progress by the time you move to the high school.

So that you can do even better in school we have asked the adults to:

- help you to improve your mathematics by giving you more chance to practise your numeracy skills in other subjects and by giving you more advice when marking your work, just like they do in literacy
- organising more chances for the Nursery and Reception children to work together
- help you to learn more about other cultures and faiths.

Thank you once again. I hope you continue to work hard and be proud of your school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector

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