

Ankermoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124160
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340504
Inspection dates	16-17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Cosgrove
Headteacher	Mrs N Rowley
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment and monitoring records, the schools planning for the future and questionnaires from pupils, staff and from 29 parents.

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

- the achievement of pupils to determine whether teaching is challenging enough
- the impact of leadership and management, especially middle management, in ensuring high quality provision
- the quality and use of assessment to ensure that all groups of pupils are fully supported and challenged.

Information about the school

Ankermoor is a smaller than average school. Nearly all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into the school's nursery. The school recently gained Healthy Schools, Activemark and International School status. There have been many changes to staff in the last two years.

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

Ankermoor Primary School provides a satisfactory education. The school also has some good features. After a period when numerous staff changes provided barriers to improvement, the school has settled down and it is now securely placed to move forwards. This position is evident in recent improvements to provision. In particular, much of current teaching is lively and enjoyable. It is early days, but these changes mean that pupils' learning and progress have improved, but they have yet to make a significant impact on attainment. Although attainment is broadly average by Year 6, from a well below starting point in the nursery, learning and progress are variable, so that pupils' progress as a whole is no more than satisfactory. This inconsistency is most marked for higher attaining pupils. Given these factors, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The two senior leaders have an accurate view of the school and work effectively to address areas of weakness, for example in teaching. Planning for the future focuses on the most significant areas of need. However, governors and middle managers do not yet monitor rigorously enough, and so do not have the information or opportunities to enable them to participate fully in school improvement. The school works assiduously to build constructive relationships with parents and has had some success. Despite these efforts, the school has yet to make an impact on the many holidays taken during term time. As a result, attendance is well below average.

The school has a happy ethos. Staff care deeply for their charges and arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Pupils behave well and relate warmly to their teachers and one another. Teachers care for pupils' welfare. Their enthusiasm in lessons often rubs off and learning can be an exciting experience. Creativity in teachers' planning leads to enjoyable lessons. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 developed their skills in English, mathematics, geography and art and design through linked activities (indoors and out), all based on their love of the story, 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. Good subject links like these enliven the curriculum. Nevertheless, there is some inconsistency in teaching.

Pupils join in daily activities keenly, helping to run the school community. Older pupils enthusiastically help the little ones with reading and sport, and the school council has a high status because pupils' views are listened to and acted on. Helped by interesting visitors from, for example, the emergency services, pupils have a good grasp of how to stay safe, both in school and in the wider world. Pupils' spiritual,

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moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with strengths in their good development of moral and social understanding.

About 40 percent of schools whose effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by summer 2010, especially for more able pupils, by
 - ensuring teaching is consistently challenging.
- Develop the monitoring role of middle managers and governors
 - to enable their full participation in school improvement by April 2010.
- Improve attendance by April 2010 through
 - building on the school's current good practices
 - working more closely with parents to reduce term-time holidays.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make the progress expected of them, given the variability of learning in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported, and progress as well as their peers. National test results indicate that attainment has been average over the last three years and achievement has been broadly satisfactory. The most recent national assessments indicate that more able pupils did not progress fast enough and, despite improvements to teaching recently, these pupils are still not always challenged as much as they should be to reach the higher levels of which they are capable. This factor depresses pupils' overall progress and, therefore, achievement is no more than satisfactory. The school has reflected on this shortcoming and has increased its efforts to provide challenging, stimulating work to all pupils, including the more able.

Pupils' learning is improving because teaching, early in the school year, is now more strongly focused on providing better challenge for all. As a result, some lessons now keep pupils at full stretch, but in others some more able pupils are not always sufficiently stimulated. However, lively teaching in the main means pupils enjoy learning. They work hard and are keen to learn. Their good behaviour and mature attitudes also assist their progress. They happily report that there is no bullying.

Pupils are proud that their school has won Activemark and Healthy Schools status. They appreciate the need for a good diet and plenty of exercise to help them to grow up healthily. Pupils' preparation for the future is satisfactory and they enjoy opportunities for enterprise activities. Despite considerable efforts from the school, too many pupils miss out on lessons while they are on holiday during the term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

With improvements in the monitoring of lessons and a stable staff, teaching is improving and is sometimes good. Lessons can be lively, thoroughly planned and use a mixture of stimulating resources, increasingly making interesting links between subjects. One outstanding example was a literacy lesson, where pupils were undertaking research on Poland. This session was planned in anticipation of twinning with a Polish school and gave pupils in Year 5 and 6 opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) and to develop both geographical and foreign language skills. This lesson was exceptional, however, not all have these characteristics. It is this variability that constrains progress over time to a satisfactory level. The school has increasing quantities of accurate assessment information and uses this well to identify and group pupils who would benefit from extra help. This information is not used so successfully to match work to the needs of the more able, so they achieve their very best.

The curriculum meets requirements and is enriched by a variety of visitors and some interesting trips. Teachers' planning is breaking down subject barriers and leading to more exciting learning experiences. Newly installed ICT equipment has improved opportunities for pupils. The school provides a good variety of after-school clubs, although take up is mixed.

Pupils are well cared for. Teachers know their needs, are kind and approachable and strive successfully to provide good support for the more vulnerable. For example, an art therapy course is provided for a small group of pupils with low self-esteem. This provision has had a significant, long-term effect on the morale and academic success

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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of these pupils. Arrangements for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well-organised and robust. Regular progress reviews and close links with parents help these pupils to succeed as well as their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior managers focus effectively on school priorities and plan well for the future, but know there is still more to be done. Over the last year they have developed a good understanding of the school and galvanised staff enthusiasm. Monitoring has led to better teaching, but inconsistency in its quality has not yet been resolved fully. After a period of much change to staff, the school is starting to develop the skills of middle managers, recognising that they are not yet robustly involved in developing whole school initiatives.

Governors are supportive of the school and appreciate the important part they should play in challenging its decisions and priorities. At the moment, they are not well placed to do this easily because they do not monitor systematically enough to provide the governing body with high quality information.

The school actively promotes positive relationships with parents. It is proactive in involving them in their children's education, but still has some way to go in promoting good attendance. Nevertheless, the school provides ongoing information about how pupils are getting on and regularly seeks and acts on parents' views. A variety of partnerships, particularly with the local authority, strongly improves the provision in this small school and contributes to the satisfactory value for money. Partners' expertise and assistance are well utilised to support the school's priorities by, for example, contributing to developing teachers' skills. Good links with a nearby high school benefit the curriculum

The school meets all safeguarding requirements. It knows which pupils may be most at risk and keeps a close eye on them, ready to act if required. It works well with other agencies. Records are complete, but not always neatly maintained. The school's child protection policy, while adequate, needs more detailed information on the system for referral. The school is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity appropriately for most, and is working hard to ensure the more able are fully catered for.

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Community cohesion is being promoted from the local area outwards. The school sees its role as central in its home area and it has undertaken numerous initiatives to reach out to local people and organisations. It is now developing links with a school in a contrasting environment in this country and one in Poland. This work has been recognised in its recently gained International School award.

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 skills and aptitudes that are well below those expected of three year olds. These are especially low in their personal development and in communications, language and literacy. All adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of their charges' learning, development and welfare needs, and plan systematically to address these requirements. The quality of their work is evident when children transfer into Year 1 with much higher skills - but still below expectations. Children progress well in their two years in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has particular success in providing pupils with the personal 'toolbox' to help them in their future lives. As five year olds, most children leave the Reception class as independent girls and boys, well able to work alone or in co-operation with their fellow learners.

Lessons in the Nursery and Reception classes are well-planned, purposeful and great fun. Adults skilfully and gently coax their charges to give of their best and are as generous with their praise as they are insistent on good behaviour. Resources and spaces, inside and out, are used effectively to provide stimuli to learning. However, the lack of a roof to the outside area means that the happy free flow of children to play and work outdoors is curtailed in bad weather. Careful assessment enables all

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adults to know their children well and they are very attentive to children’s welfare needs. Warm, constructive links with parents support this aspect. The area is well led and managed. The adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage comprise a tight-knit, effective team so the area runs smoothly day-to-day.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Most returns were positive but some concerns were expressed. Nearly a quarter of responses were unhappy with information about pupils’ progress, but other parents wrote that the school was open and approachable. One typical written comment expressed the view that, ‘all of the staff are very easy and accessible to talk to’. Inspectors found that information sent home is satisfactory. About one fifth of parents do not believe the school is effectively led and managed and do not think the school deals well with bad behaviour. The inspection found no evidence to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ankermoor 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	34	14	48	4	14	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	11	38	14	48	3	10	1	3
The school informs me about my child’s progress	7	24	14	48	6	21	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	21	15	52	3	10	3	10
The teaching is good at this school	9	31	14	48	3	10	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	7	24	17	59	3	10	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	31	16	55	2	7	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	24	15	52	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	8	28	14	48	2	7	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	48	14	32	4	9	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	21	15	52	3	10	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	5	17	16	55	3	10	3	10
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	7	25	15	54	5	18	1	4

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 all 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

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 pupils' 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.



18 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ankermoor Primary School, Tamworth B77 3NW

Many thanks for the friendly welcome and help you gave to us when we visited your school. It was really good to talk to such charming, well-behaved pupils.

Ankermoor provides you with a satisfactory education. You told us you were happy at school. We can see that you are well cared for and grow into confident and helpful young people. The mix of subjects you do (called the curriculum) is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are also satisfactory, but the inspectors noted signs of improvement, with some good or better lessons. These changes have not yet boosted your attainment, which is similar to other children of your age.

The headteacher and staff work hard to help you learn and develop. They plan effectively for the future and work hard to keep in touch with your parents. They bring in lots of extra help when it is needed. Like most schools, some things could be better. We have asked the school to concentrate on the following things.

- Raising your attainment through better teaching and providing work to stretch the most able. If you think your work is too easy, you can help with this by asking for harder tasks.
- Encouraging governors and other teachers to check up more on the way the school is working.
- Improving attendance through cutting down on holidays taken during the term.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure to meet you all.

With all good wishes

Yours faithfully

John Carnaghan
Lead Inspector

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