



St Luke's CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124250
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292933
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Eadie

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

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|---|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Leek Road |
| School category | Voluntary controlled | | Endon |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 | | Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9EB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01782 502369 |
| Number on roll (school) | 217 | Fax number | 01782 505389 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Glennys White |
| | | Headteacher | David Law |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 February 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves the village of Endon, although a number of pupils travel in from further afield. The area is relatively economically advantaged, which is reflected in the lower than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are White British and all speak English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is very popular and it is not difficult to see why, as it is a good school, with some outstanding features. Parents recognise this success, many saying such things as, 'The dedication of the staff is exemplary and builds a strong foundation for learning, mutual respect and self-belief'.

So, what is the secret of its success? At the heart is the work of the senior leaders, who have, to quote a typical parental comment, 'lots of innovative ideas and have made the school like one big family unit'. Leadership and management are clearly good. A measure of their success is the well above average standards being reached by the end of Year 6 and the good achievement of pupils through the school. An indicator of the drive to move forward is that although about two thirds of the pupils gain the higher level in the national tests in Year 6, a key priority is to raise the proportion of higher levels still further, particularly in writing. A major factor in pupils' good progress is the good teaching through the school, which is resulting in pupils' good learning. Children make a good start in the Reception class, where provision is good, and they make good progress.

The family atmosphere is a major contributory factor to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Their behaviour is exemplary and they show high levels of care and concern for each other. They say that they thoroughly enjoy school and this enjoyment is evident in their good attitudes to their lessons and learning. Much of this is due to mutual respect and the excellent pastoral care provided by all adults. The adoption of a healthy and safe lifestyle has a high priority in the school and pupils' response to this is excellent. For example, they take full advantage of the wide range of sporting activities, make very healthy eating choices and play safely with very good consideration of the needs of others.

The school has worked hard and successfully to ensure that its curriculum is more relevant and interesting for pupils, and it is good. Particular successes are the regular theme or subject weeks. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the multicultural week that they had enjoyed a few weeks before. The range of visits and visitors has been increased and these, too, are much appreciated by pupils.

So, what has to be done to move the next step forward? There is a recognition that the results of assessments are not yet used as effectively as they might be, to ensure that pupils know exactly what they need to learn next. Although some older pupils are aware of their next steps in learning, this is not consistent through the school. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall, the strength in pastoral care being balanced by this area for development in academic guidance and support. The school has also accurately identified as a priority the need to raise standards in writing so that they are as good as those in reading. At present, too few pupils are achieving the higher levels in writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards of writing so that they are as good as standards of reading

- use the systems of assessment more effectively so that teachers and pupils know exactly what the next steps in learning should be.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Reception class with levels of skills and knowledge broadly in line with those normally found. This represents a change since the last inspection, which is due to the fact that children are now coming from a wider range of pre-school settings. Children make good progress in the Reception class and, by the time they start in Year 1, they have reached standards above those expected for their age. Progress continues to be good through the rest of the school and, by the time they leave, pupils have reached well above average standards. Achievement for both boys and girls is good throughout the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are making good progress in relation to their abilities as they are supported well and have clear plans made for their progress. The school has recognised the need to put in place a scheme to fully challenge the most able pupils. At present, although these pupils are often given more challenging work, there are times when they do not make the best possible progress as they are given the same work as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are building a very clear knowledge of right and wrong and of their responsibilities for living in a community. Their spiritual development is enhanced very well by the close links with the parish church as well as the excitement and wonder from their learning. At the previous inspection, pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society was identified as a weakness. Much work has been successfully carried out to improve this; for example, the multicultural week and the exchanges with a school with a diverse ethnic mix have increased pupils' understanding.

Pupils' contribution to the community is good and there are very good links with the local community. For example, the school is very involved in the area well-dressing. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school, for example being buddies to help younger pupils. However, opportunities for younger pupils to be involved in the running of the school are more limited. Pupils' good development of basic skills is helping prepare them well for their future, and the school is looking into ways in which pupils can be involved in mini-enterprise schemes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overwhelming impression is of a calm, orderly and purposeful working environment in classrooms. Teachers are very well organised and plan a good variety of activities for their pupils. This ensures that pupils are involved and interested and they work keenly. Teaching assistants and volunteers play a key role, particularly in supporting pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities to enable them to make the same good progress as their classmates. Teachers almost always share the objective for the lesson with pupils and they are therefore involved in their learning.

An area for development in teaching is that sometimes teachers do not provide a sufficiently wide range of work for the differing abilities in their classes. In these instances, it is usually the more able pupils who do not make the progress they should, as work for them is not sufficiently challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has done a great deal to make the curriculum more lively and interesting. For example, expertise has been brought in to widen opportunities. A native French speaker teaches all classes and the pupils thoroughly enjoy the lively approach and are developing good accents and knowledge of the language. Good links have also been established with the local high school and they have given good support for information and communication technology, for instance. Work is still needed to make more links between subjects so that pupils can see the relevance of their learning. A good example of where this is happening is in the Reception class, where activities are often planned to address a number of different areas of learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sporting, of which the pupils take full advantage, and this adds to their enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school with thorough procedures for ensuring pupils' protection and safety. Excellent relationships between pupils and adults lead to mutual consideration and respect. Parents and pupils recognise that the school is a safe place in which to learn and play, pupils saying such things as, 'Teachers look after us'. The school has put in place systems to record the progress that pupils are making to ensure that none fall behind. However, these systems are not being used consistently to set clear targets. Teachers and pupils, therefore, are not always clear about what it is that pupils need to learn next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's process of self-evaluation is very thorough, involving all staff, parents and governors. The evaluation document paints an honest and accurate picture of strengths and areas for development. The school improvement plan that results is a clear document with a vision for future developments. This has enabled plans to be put in place to raise standards still further, for example in writing. The school improvement plan is being developed so that it provides a continual three year plan. At present it is not a dynamic document in that it is not updated annually. This means that towards the end of the three-year span of the document, planning for the future is not sufficiently clear. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable and many find time to visit to find out for themselves what is going on.

Improving systems for communicating with parents was identified in the previous inspection as an area for development. This has improved enormously and parents are almost universally happy with the information that they receive and the way that the school is ready to listen to their comments and concerns. A high proportion of parents returned their questionnaires and the response was overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents are now much more involved in their children's education and this is improving pupils' learning. The progress the school has made and the well above average standards being maintained show that the school is well placed to continue on its upward route.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for welcoming me when I visited your school this week. I very much enjoyed meeting and talking with many of you. Thank you for telling me so much about your school, which is a good school with some outstanding features. You are clearly enjoying school and are right to be so proud of it.

These are some of the good things I found:

- your behaviour is outstanding and you are developing well into responsible young citizens
- you are making good progress and reaching well above average standards because teaching is good
- all adults look after you really well; they make sure that the school is a happy, friendly and safe place
- your headteacher and other teachers know clearly what they want to do to make the school even better
- the school organises some really good things to make your learning more interesting, such as the multicultural week and visits and visitors
- most of you are very good at making sure that you eat healthily and take regular exercise. You are also very considerate and play safely.

In order to help you make even better progress, I have asked the headteacher and other staff to:

- help you to improve the standard of your writing so that it is as good as your reading
- make sure that the targets set for you are clearer so that you know exactly how to improve your work.

Best wishes, and keep up the good work.