

Tilston Parochial CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111284
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	378267
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead 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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Stephenson
Headteacher	Richard Harley
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Shirley Herring

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five teachers in eight lessons, listened to pupils read and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. The inspector looked for any responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection; however there were none at the time. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, documentation regarding the safeguarding of pupils, assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress, the analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils, the school development plan and reports from the School Improvement Partner. She scrutinised 28 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school and all four classes contain two age groups. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage and no pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The nursery caters for children from the school and from a neighbouring primary school. There is a breakfast-club and an after-school club managed by the governing body. The school meets the current floor standard.

Shortly after the last inspection the school had several temporary and acting headteachers following the long-term absence and subsequent resignation of the previous headteacher. A new headteacher took up post in May 2011.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils’ behaviour is a significant strength. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school’s overall effectiveness is not yet good because, despite recent improvements, some more-able pupils do not achieve as well as they could and pupils’ attainment in writing is weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- Achievement is satisfactory and attainment is broadly average but is improving quickly. Concerted action by the new leadership team is having an impact and the work in pupils’ books this year shows good improvements in the quality of writing. Pupils with special educational needs or with a disability achieve well because of the good level of support they receive in class, in small groups or individually.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have responded well to whole-school initiatives and training, and teaching is improving. Teachers mark work rigorously and give clear guidance to help pupils to improve. They are skilled in targeting questions to include pupils who find learning more difficult so they learn well. However, in some lessons there is insufficient challenge for more-able pupils to help them learn as well as they can.
- An undoubted strength of the school is pupils' excellent behaviour. They are extremely polite and friendly and make a major contribution to the harmonious atmosphere in school. They are thoughtful and display considerable maturity when explaining their thinking. They help each other without fuss and are quick to commend the good work of others in class. Attendance is consistently high.
- Leadership and management are good. The governing body have provided stability and support during a period of change. Responses from staff indicate that the new leadership team have their wholehearted support in raising achievement and the overall performance of the school. A rigorous programme of monitoring by senior leaders and well-structured training have resulted in

improvements in teaching. Management of performance is effective. Actions to address weaknesses in writing are quickly improving the quality of writing.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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 the achievement of more-able pupils by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently provide more challenge in lessons and pupils are able to work on suitably demanding tasks earlier in lessons
 - devising and targeting questions to challenge more-able pupils to think more deeply.
- Sustain and build further on recent improvements in writing by ensuring the monitoring of actions taken to secure improvement continues to focus rigorously on how well these actions impact on pupils' attainment.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the school with a range of skills that, overall, are typical for their age. Letter sounds and counting skills are taught systematically and well and children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and attainment is broadly average by the time they leave. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because of the good level of support they receive. Consequently, all pupils achieved the expected levels in the 2011 national assessments at the end of Year 6 in mathematics and English. Lower-attaining pupils are closing the gap with their peers because of the good level of support they receive. More-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Attainment in writing has not been as good as in reading or mathematics. However, there is strong evidence in pupils' books and in the school's assessments of pupils' progress that attainment has improved significantly in the past two terms. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Attainment in reading is broadly average in Year 2 and is above average in Year 6.

Learning is most effective when pupils are challenged to think and apply their knowledge; for example, pupils in a Year 3/4 lesson had to choose the correct definition for 'equilibrium' and correctly linked their knowledge of the terms 'equal' and 'balance'. Learning is less effective, especially for the more able, when teachers spend too much time talking to the class before pupils can get on with their own independent work and when they are not consistently challenged.

Parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. Though satisfactory over time, inspection evidence shows an improving picture of pupils' current progress.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are of the view that teaching is good. Inspection evidence shows that teachers have responded well to the introduction of a variety of strategies and staff training to improve the quality of teaching. The majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good. However, pupils' attainment and progress in the recent past shows that the impact of teaching over time has been satisfactory.

Lessons are usually well planned and teachers give clear instructions and explanations so pupils know what to do. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to explain their answers and this helps them to organise their thoughts and to develop their communication skills. They provide many opportunities for pupils to work together to enhance learning and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was seen in an outstanding literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6 where pupils cooperated sensibly to great effect to dramatise a poem. Pupils agreed that this had helped them to understand the message in the poem that prejudice of any kind is unacceptable.

Teachers adjust the curriculum to suit the needs of different ages in their class and to suit the different needs of most pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Skilled teaching assistants support this work well. Teachers are not always quite so successful at providing suitable challenge for more-able pupils throughout the lesson. For example, in class sessions, whilst teachers target appropriate questions to involve those who find some things difficult, there are not always suitably challenging questions for more-able pupils. Whilst teachers plan work to match the needs of different groups, in some lessons more-able pupils have to complete comparatively simple tasks first of all before moving on to the tasks more suited to their level of ability. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve. This has had a good impact, particularly in writing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils, parents and carers are very clear in their view that behaviour is outstanding and has never been a concern during their time in school. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and exceptionally well behaved and this makes a significant contribution to the warm, welcoming and harmonious atmosphere in the school. Pupils routinely cooperate and work together very successfully in class and this enhances their learning. There were many instances of pupils taking time, unbidden, to help others in lessons and including all pupils in a games lesson in the playground. Pupils are very well aware of different forms of bullying through initiatives such as anti-bullying week and say that bullying of any kind is unheard of in the school. They accept responsibility readily and the school council are rightly proud of their contribution in planning the layout and researching prices for the new outdoor furniture. They talk knowledgeably about how they had to adjust their plans several times to find furniture that fitted the space and the budget. They talk with great pleasure about how much more involved they are now in marking their own work, with clear guidelines, and they feel that this is helping them to understand how they

can improve. This has been a significant factor in the improvements seen in their books this year.

Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school because everyone cares for each other. They have a very good understanding of all elements of safety because of special weeks in school devoted to aspects such as e-safety and anti-bullying. They benefit from many visitors to school to raise their awareness of keeping safe; for example, older pupils learn about first aid from St. John's Ambulance and participate in the cycling proficiency scheme. Pupils are very punctual and attendance is consistently high.

Leadership and management

After an extended period of change, staff say they welcome the stability, clear direction and drive from the new leadership team. Morale is high and adults share an ambition to raise pupils' achievement. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have been extended and refined and are now being used effectively to identify and address any underachievement at an early stage. Attainment in writing has been a weakness for some time. Following a period of rigorous monitoring of lessons and support from local authority consultants, leaders have introduced an extensive range of strategies to raise attainment in writing. These include a well-planned programme of staff training, initiatives such as 'The Big Write', a consistent approach to marking by teachers, and increasingly by pupils themselves, and extended opportunities to write in other subjects. Observation in lessons indicates that these initiatives have helped to improve the quality of teaching and work in pupils' books shows that this is having a positive impact in improving the quality of writing across the school this year. School leaders recognise the importance of continuing to rigorously monitor pupils' performance in writing so as to sustain and build further on these improvements.

Governance is good. The governing body provided calm leadership and support during a period of change. They are a regular presence in school and provide informed support and challenge for the headteacher. They are well aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding pupils and staff and all required systems and procedures are in place. The school extends its care beyond the school day. The before- and after-school clubs are well supervised and make good provision for all pupils, including those from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and this contributes to their excellent behaviour. Assemblies provide rich opportunities for pupils to experience spirituality through moving opportunities for singing and quiet reflection. Their understanding of different cultures is promoted successfully in, for example, exchanging letters with pupils in a school in Qatar and during 'Global Weeks' in school. The curriculum is good because it engages pupils' interest well and is well balanced so that pupils have good opportunities to practise key skills across subjects. For example, the decision to link subjects together within themes is providing pupils with good quality opportunities for writing and this is improving their skills. Residential visits and a good programme for personal, social and health education promote pupils' personal development well. Provision for children in the

Early Years Foundation Stage is good because activities are suitably practical and show that staff have a good understanding of how young children learn.

Leaders and the governing body effectively promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. The good provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well managed and has helped to close the gap between these groups and their peers for them to achieve the level expected for their age by the time they leave. The school's self-evaluation has accurately identified areas for improvement and has a clear programme to address them. Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been fully addressed. Concerted actions to improve writing are having a clear impact. These factors indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tilston Parochial CofE Primary School, Malpas SY14 7HB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in small groups and I found your views very useful. You are extremely polite, friendly and exceptionally well behaved. You are a credit to your parents and carers and your school. Well done! You clearly enjoy school and almost all of you come every day. I was so pleased to be able to join you in assembly and was very impressed by your beautiful singing.

Tilston is a satisfactory school but it is improving quickly. Lessons are interesting and there is always someone on hand for those who need extra help. You reach the standards that are usual for your age by the time you leave Year 6. In the past, pupils did better in reading and mathematics than in writing. However, you showed me in your books that your writing is improving. This is because the headteacher and teachers have introduced lots of ways to help you make your writing better. You clearly enjoy the 'Big Write' and were counting down for the next one to happen.

It is part of my job to suggest ways to improve your school. I have asked your teachers to:

- build on the recent improvements in writing by checking that all your activities are helping you to improve
- make sure that those of you who find some learning easy are suitably challenged and can get on with more difficult tasks more quickly in lessons.

I hope you continue to enjoy school, attend regularly and behave so very well.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring
Lead inspector

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