



Malpas Alport Endowed Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111282
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278643
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Brian Padgett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Chester Road
School category	Foundation		Malpas
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheshire SY14 8PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01948 860367
Number on roll	198	Fax number	1948 860803
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Louise Rodge
Date of previous inspection	20 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr J Womersley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a village school in rural Cheshire. Children come from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds although the number taking a school meal free of charge is low. Attainment on entry is average. There are a relatively small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. About a third of these have significant problems, an above average proportion, and they have statements of special educational need. Nearly all the children are from white British families. The school is popular. The numbers of children in the junior classes is increasing as parents choose to transfer their children to this school midway through their primary education. By Year 6, typically, a third of the children have joined the school at some time in the previous four years.

The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark on a number of occasions and achieved Investor in People status in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. It provides a stimulating environment for learning and has a good ethos. It is highly regarded by parents, and children are happy here, although they could play a greater role in the life of the school. Behaviour and attendance are good. Children's personal development is satisfactory and they have a good understanding of what constitutes healthy living. Standards are broadly average, although higher at the end of the Foundation Stage, and children achieve satisfactorily overall in relation to their capabilities. The teaching is broadly satisfactory and good in the Foundation Stage (Reception), Year 1 and in Year 6. Leadership and management are sound, but need to be sharper in checking that teaching and learning are effective in all classes and that development plans lead to improvements in standards. Staff with management responsibilities are not sufficiently involved in leading actions to promote improvement. Reasonable progress has been made since the last inspection. The school judges itself as 'good'. In practice it is 'satisfactory'. However, the headteacher, teachers, staff and governors are hardworking and keen to improve. They have the capacity to do so.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 2 to 5.
- Involve the children more in their learning and in the life of the school.
- Make better use of the skills of staff with management responsibilities to lead on improvements.
- Increase the effectiveness of development planning and of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average and children make satisfactory progress overall. They get a good start in Reception. From an average base, attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage is higher than the county average. The results of national tests and assessments at Year 2 have been consistently average. At Year 6, they have varied around the average, sometimes a little higher and sometimes slightly lower. In the latest tests, in 2005, the children did well in reading and in science, but less well in writing and mathematics. The school's targets were exceeded in science and English overall, but were not met in mathematics.

Although progress is satisfactory overall, there are variations between classes and different groups of children. Progress is good in Reception and Year 1, and in Year 6. Girls reach higher standards than boys and children who have been at the school from the start do better than those who join in the juniors. Children with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. There are a number of able children. They do not achieve as consistently as they could, and this is reflected in the proportion of children who achieve the higher levels in the national tests. Standards in art are high.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children's personal development is satisfactory with some good features. Attendance is above average. Children normally behave well. They are polite and articulate. They enjoy learning and try hard with their work. When behaviour and attention are not as good this is usually because the lessons are not sufficiently interesting. Children's social, moral and cultural development are good. They gain from the wide opportunities the school provides for them to work with others, consider what is right and proper and to learn about other peoples' lives. They feel safe in school. Bullying is not tolerated. Another good feature is children's understanding about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They are beginning to make healthy choices. They take part in a lot of sport and physical exercise, eat more fruit and choose healthy options more often at lunchtime.

The school is considering ways in which it can provide children with the skills they will need for the future, in addition to the basic skills. The policy on citizenship is under review. Children's emotional well-being and their understanding of rights and responsibilities are actively promoted, for example, in assemblies and during 'circle times'. Children's spiritual development is satisfactory. However, the school does not have a school council or sufficiently encourage children to be independent and responsible in lessons and in the wider life of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. During the inspection, the quality of teaching observed ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory, although the balance of quality was towards satisfactory and good teaching. The best teaching was in Reception, Year 1 and in Year 6. The quality of work in children's exercise books varied to the same extent as the quality of teaching. Although children's views of the teaching they receive was positive, this inconsistency is a matter of concern. In detail, there are inconsistencies in the degree to which lessons are matched to the learning needs of each group, in the quality of marking, and to how interesting lessons are for children. The quality of teacher's planning varies widely and the success of learning was closely related to how well lessons were planned. For example, when teachers did not tell the children what they were to learn, children were not always sure what they were learning about. When teachers did not plan effectively for different groups of learners, expectations for the more able were often too low.

Teachers' relationships with children are invariably good. Behaviour is managed well and children like their teachers. This is a willing and hardworking staff who celebrate children's achievements. The whole school is full of wonderful displays of children's work and this creates a stimulating learning environment. Teamwork amongst staff is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and teaching assistants

provide significant support for children who are having difficulty with their learning and/or their behaviour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is of satisfactory quality. Learning opportunities for children in lessons are broad and balanced and supplemented by a good range of enrichment activities outside of school and outside of school hours. The curriculum in Reception and Year 1 is particularly imaginative and captures children's interest whilst providing well for all areas of learning and the teaching of basic skills. For the older children, except those in Years 5 and 6, the subjects are linked less well. For example, opportunities for children to practice the writing skills they have learned in English lessons are not routinely planned in other subjects. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy provide the basis for the teaching of English and mathematics. Some very good teaching of writing was observed in Year 6, based on the literacy strategy. A full range of additional work is provided for children who fall behind with their work. The provision for information and communication technology is sound and teachers are beginning to use the newly installed interactive whiteboards to good effect. The school uses the requirement to provide teachers with planning and preparation time in an imaginative way. A teacher provides lessons in physical education and French when the class teachers are preparing lessons, so that the curriculum is extended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. This is a caring school and children are safe here. Staff are committed to the children. Their clear concern for their well-being and the approachability of staff are major reasons why children are happy at the school. As one boy said, 'Teachers are always up for a chat!' Newcomers settle quickly, including those entering the school mid way through their primary education. Procedures for safeguarding children are robust and teachers have up to date training in child protection. However, not all midday staff were clear about what to do. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported appropriately in class and the school works closely with parents and other agencies in order to ensure their learning needs are met. Individual education plans are of satisfactory quality, although, at times, not all the teaching assistants working in the class are aware of the targets the children are working towards. The school has good informal links with the supervisor of the breakfast/after school club. However, these links should be made more formal to ensure continuity of care between the school and the club and that the transfer of necessary information about children is always carried out. The academic support and guidance children receive through marking is inconsistent from class to class. The school has a tracking system that plots children's attainment, but is a rather cumbersome paper-based system at present, and does not easily lend itself to the identification of those children and groups that are at risk of underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school has a good ethos and it runs smoothly. Parents commented on how children, parents and visitors are made to feel welcome. This is because the headteacher sets the tone for the school in a calm and considerate manner. He has the full confidence of parents and governors.

The headteacher has a clear and inclusive vision, built up over 20 years of service to the school. It is largely rooted in an informal approach to improvement, and is not the less for that, but the approach is not fully effective. The school judged all areas of its work as 'good'. In practice all areas are 'satisfactory'. The school is not working as effectively as it could and this is why the children are not attaining above the average. The self-evaluation is adequately informed by parents' views but not sufficiently by those of the children. Sound improvement has been made since the last inspection. In particular, the provision in the Foundation Stage has got even better, and a consistent behaviour management policy is in operation. However, management for improvement is too vague. Weaker areas have not been dealt with rigorously and remain unresolved, such as the standards in writing, the achievement of boys relative to girls and the standards attained by the more able. Importantly, the monitoring of teaching and learning has not tackled the inconsistencies between the best and least effective practice. School development planning is not sufficiently based on a thorough analysis of the shortfalls in performance or led to focused, rigorously monitored plans to secure improvement. The deputy headteacher and subject leaders have not been used fully and given specific responsibilities to raise standards and improve provision.

Notwithstanding the above weaknesses, staff at all levels and governors demonstrate the willingness to improve and the capacity to do so.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	No
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, Mr Brennan and I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our time at Malpas Alport and everyone made us feel very welcome. I am writing to let you know what we found.

The things we think are good about your school are:

- we like the way you get on so well with your teachers and how they are kind to you
- that you enjoy school, work hard, and behave well
- we think the school is a very welcoming place. Mr Womersley makes everyone feel at home. We especially liked your artwork and the displays. It made a big impression on us and made the school a very interesting place to be
- you are learning lots about healthy living and more importantly, you are beginning to put your learning into practice by making healthy choices.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make the school even better. They are:

- encourage you to be more independent in lessons and to give you a bigger say in the organisation and running of your school
- to help you learn even better in lessons, for instance by making sure each group of children has work at just the right level of challenge for them
- to check that plans and lessons really do end up in you achieving even higher standards.

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection.