



Grappenhall St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111315
LEA Warrington
Inspection number 278652
Inspection dates 1 November 2005 to 2 November 2005
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	Church Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Grappenhall
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Warrington, Cheshire WA4 3EP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 262721
Number on roll	385	Fax number	01925 261194
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Bygate
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs G Davies

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 1 November 2005 - 2 November 2005	Inspection number 278652
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is situated within the old village of Grappenhall, to the south east of Warrington. The area served by the school is affluent and there are very few children receiving a school meal free of charge. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Nearly all the children are of white British heritage, with just a few from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The school is popular. About a quarter of the children come from outside the school's catchment area. Children enter Reception (the Foundation Unit) with varied pre-school experiences from a number of early years settings.

The inspection took place at a time when both the headteacher and her deputy were new to their posts.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. It provides good value for money. It was a successful school at the time of the last inspection and it has maintained its high standards. All the issues raised at that time have been dealt with successfully. Now, under good new leadership and management, it is improving further. The inspectors agree broadly with the school's self-evaluation, although in some respects the school is better than indicated.

Teaching and learning are good, and sometimes very good. This is a school where, above all, teachers enjoy teaching and children of all abilities enjoy learning. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Unit and in the junior classes. They achieve well in the infants, but not quite as well as in the rest of the school. Children's attitudes to learning, and their development into mature young people, are exemplary. The capacity to improve even further is good, since all important aspects of the school are at least good and sometimes better than this. It has a few weaker areas to tackle, such as ensuring opportunities for the 5 to 7 year olds matches that of the other children, and that management policies and practice focus more on improving outcomes for children. In addition, there are relatively few teaching assistants to support the work of teachers. Just occasionally, the lack of support has a negative impact on children's learning. However, these points for development do not detract significantly from the achievement of a school in which parents justifiably place their confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children in Key Stage 1 make the same very good progress made by children in the rest of the school, and that they have similar opportunities to take responsibility and to take part in out of school activities enjoyed by the older pupils.
- Ensure key documents and management procedures are consistently evaluated against the impact of their benefit to children.
- As and when funding allows, improve the support available to teachers during lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

This is a high performing school. Children achieve well overall, and many achieve very well. Standards reached by 11 year olds are often very high, and even in years where cohorts show less academic ability than others, standards remain well above average. The latest results, from 2005, continue to indicate high standards. Children generally exceed the targets set for them.

Children enter the Foundation Unit with varied experiences from as many as 10 different pre-school settings. Their levels of capability on entry are not as high as one might imagine with children from advantaged backgrounds. However, children settle very

quickly in the Foundation Unit and rapidly show their promise. By the time they move into Year 1, they are nearly always above average in all areas of learning. Progress in the infant classes has been good, but not as good as in the rest of the school. A significant factor has been the disruption to staffing and to the leadership within the infant department in the past few years. Children make very good progress in the junior classes.

Although just one or two parents registered concerns, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early. They receive excellent support which enables them to make very good progress, in reading and writing, for example. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are completely integrated and they make just as much progress as the white British children. Quite a number of the children are more able, and a small but significant number are very able. They have traditionally done well, but more recent developments, in which the school plays a leading role with other schools, particularly in mathematics, are enabling them to do even better. Some are now making outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development is outstanding. By the time they are 11 years of age, children's attitudes to learning could hardly be bettered. In the lessons observed, without exception, all children did their very best. They listen very well to their teachers and to each other, and when they are asked to play an active part, often working in small groups, they co-operate with their partners exceptionally well.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest order. Children are happy in school. Attendance is at very high levels. The very good ethos of the school is due, in no small part, to children liking school and the excellent way in which they conduct themselves. They take good care of each other. This is seen at its very best when each Year 6 pupil links up with a child in the Foundation Unit, and teaches them one-to-one using lesson plans they have devised in class. Behaviour in class is beyond criticism, but boisterousness and disagreements occasionally occur in the playground. However, when incidents are brought to the attention of staff, children show great maturity for their age in resolving conflict. They show exemplary concern for those less fortunate than themselves, and they are developing a keen sense of fair play and compassion for others.

Children are responding well to the school's initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles. They are taking advantage of the many sporting activities that are being provided, especially cross-country running, and they are beginning to exercise more discretion over what they eat in school. They willingly take on responsibility, from the Foundation Stage upwards, and there is both a school council and an 'eco council' for older children. However, although children are preparing very well for life in the future, on the whole, more responsibility and opportunities for out of school activities could be provided for the 5 to 7 year olds.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. At the heart of the success of the teaching and learning are the exceptionally good relationships between teachers and their pupils. Teachers are fully committed to the children and to making lessons interesting, for example, by making frequent use of information and communication technology (ICT). Children respond enthusiastically by trying their best. All the teaching observed on the inspection was at least good, with some better than that.

Teachers plan lessons so that pupils of all abilities can succeed. Their marking of children's work is good, often involving the learner in assessing success and pointing the way to improvement. More recently, planning for lessons has extended beyond that for the more able, to meet the needs of the very able. A very good example of this approach was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where gifted young mathematicians were set a challenging, multi-layered task that they had to complete unsupervised. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well in class when there is support available, and very effective one-to-one sessions with teaching assistants help them with their basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy and boost their self-esteem. Compared to many primary schools, there are relatively few teaching assistants. The absence of support for teachers who are trying to meet the needs of children of widely different abilities, and in setting up ICT, for example, occasionally has a negative impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It provides all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, including opportunities for residential visits, at least for the older pupils.

The core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are given priority to ensure core skills are acquired. This is particularly true for those children who find learning difficult, for whom effective intervention programmes in the core skills are provided. Good results for all children in national tests over many years are a pointer to the effectiveness of the school's work in these subjects. The school is now broadening its curriculum in response to the national agenda for children, Every Child Matters, to encompass newer areas of learning, about healthy living, staying safe and skills that will best fit children for life in the future. It is doing this very successfully, and the children show interest in and awareness of these aspects of learning. There is a conscious effort by teachers to make lessons more interesting and relevant by linking learning from a number of subjects to a topic of interest; this was seen to good effect in a Year 1 lesson based on museums, and in Year 5 lessons on science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for children are good, with several very good features. The excellent relationships that underpin the quality of teaching and learning and make them effective also impact on the care and support for children. The headteacher and her staff know their children well as individuals. They look for the best in each child and praise them, and, as a consequence, children grow in confidence and in self-esteem. Teachers' expectations of behaviour, standards, and attitudes to work in lessons are very high. Discipline is tight, and teachers do not hesitate to insist on compliance. The assessment of children's progress by the senior staff is rigorous and the marking of their work by the class teachers is thorough. Parents and children are increasingly involved in the setting of targets, and parents increasingly involved as partners in their children's homework.

The arrangements for the safeguarding of children are good, in the main. The arrangements for child protection, in particular, are known and understood by all staff. Links with support agencies, pre-school settings, and with other schools are strong, but the school should develop closer relations with the independent provider of after school care.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with a number of very strong features. The headteacher and her deputy have only been in their posts for seven weeks. The various responsibilities of the new senior team are not yet finalised. The changeover of leadership has been smooth. The headteacher has good knowledge and understanding of the school acquired in her previous roles of deputy and acting headteacher at the school. This was clearly evident in the accuracy of the self-evaluation provided for inspectors.

Although this is already a successful and inclusive school, the headteacher, governors and staff are not complacent and see the need for improvement in a number of areas. There is a strong sense of unity amongst the staff and a readiness to take on new ideas, so that the capacity for improvement is good. A promising start has already been made; for example, in providing a more rounded education for children that better supports their development as young people. In addition, the partnership with parents has been strengthened. Many parents wrote to the inspection team to express their approval of the changes that have been made by the new headteacher.

Understandably, there is work yet to be done in order that plans come to fruition. For this to happen, key policies and practices should be sharpened, including the school's improvement plan and the procedures for checking on the quality of teaching so they are more closely linked to outcomes for children.

The governors are well informed. They provide good guardianship of the school and they successfully preserve its distinctive character through strong links with the church.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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	Yes
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

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time at St Wilfrid's. We would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

There were lots of things we thought good:

We liked the 'feel' of the school and we were particularly impressed by how much the teachers enjoyed teaching you and how much you enjoyed learning from them. Everybody seems to do well and have fun at St Wilfrid's, regardless of whether they find learning easy or difficult. As well as reaching high standards in your tests each year we thought you were well on the way to becoming good citizens of the future, with your interest in healthy eating and regular exercise and your concern for others. Behind the scenes, the headteacher, governors and teachers are working successfully on your behalf, and we are pleased to read of how many of your parents feel involved in your education and support the school 100%.

We didn't think there were many things that could be improved. One that we imagine children in Years 1 and 2 will be pleased about is that we thought you are ready to be given even more responsibility than you are given right now, and that you should have more opportunities to take part in out of school clubs. We also thought you should have more teaching assistants to help you in lessons, and the governors promised to do this as soon as they have the money to pay for them. In addition, we asked the headteacher to check that all the important plans for the school actually help you learn even better.

So well done from the inspection team! We hope you will continue to work hard and enjoy your lessons.