



Hoole CE Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134248
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 282506
Inspection dates 19 January 2006 to 20 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Dee Brigstock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hoole Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Chester
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Cheshire CH2 3HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01244 323890
Number on roll	359	Fax number	01244 347335
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs N Sayce
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Judith Sharman

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Hoole CE Primary and Nursery School is a large, newly amalgamated and newly built school. During the amalgamation process, a very high number of pupils either left or joined the school. The school includes two units for pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A high proportion of these have emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of educational need is much higher than usual. Most pupils are from a white British heritage, with few from minority ethnic backgrounds, and few at an early stage of learning English. The socio-economic background of most pupils is average. The knowledge and skills of children when they start school vary widely from one year to the next. Currently they are above average.

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 which is improving quickly. It provides satisfactory value for

money. Pupils really enjoy coming to school, behave well and develop into mature, responsible young people by Year 6. They have a good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy, promoted well by the healthy food provided by the school cook.

Pupils receive good care and support but need more guidance on how to improve their work further. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because of effective teaching. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included well in the school and make good progress.

Teaching is satisfactory. There are some outstanding teachers in school who share their

expertise effectively with less experienced staff and this has led to a rise in standards this year. Standards are average in English, broadly average in mathematics but significantly low in science, where there is some repetition in the curriculum. The school

knows that some of the more capable pupils are not doing as well, in mathematics and science, as they could.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The experienced headteacher has very effectively created a new vision for the school and inspired all members of the school community, including newly appointed curriculum leaders, to be 'all in it together' in the

drive for improvement. The school's evaluation of its work is generally accurate, although it is too modest in its judgement about pupils' personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards in mathematics and science by:

- giving pupils more opportunities to apply their learning in practical, investigative activities

- increasing pupils' range and use of mathematical and scientific language
- informing pupils more precisely on how they can improve their work further.

In science:

- re-plan the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 to avoid repetition.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall progress is satisfactory. Currently standards in the Foundation Stage are above average and children make good progress. Since the school was opened in 2003, pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 and the standards they attain, have risen significantly in English, reflecting the school's prime drive for improvement and pupils' growing awareness of what they need to do to improve further. This is clear in Years 5 and 6, where pupils make a significant spurt of progress. The school is now applying similar methods to raise standards in mathematics and science, but the impact of these has not yet fully taken effect. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory but it is inadequate in science. In both subjects, pupils lack investigative skills and use of subject specific language. Due to good teaching and personal support, pupils with emotional and behavioural needs in the enhanced provision units make good progress, particularly in managing their behaviour, and so creating conditions in which they can progress well in their learning. The same is true for all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, saying that, 'lessons are interesting, and staff are helpful and treat us with respect'. Pupils generally behave well and act in a sensible, safe manner. They pay good attention to instructions, and collaborate well when, for instance, working with their 'talking partners'. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

High quality displays of pupils' work, including self-portraits in the style of Picasso and collages depicting different moods, provide for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. From an early age, children are encouraged to understand their own and others' emotions and needs. This leads them to become tolerant of, for example, those who find self-control difficult. Older pupils who are prefects show maturity and are keen to take on additional responsibilities. Members of the 'Oppo team' happily support those who find it hard to join in at playtime, and the newly established school council has made some sensible suggestions for improvements. Assemblies are of good quality, with encouragement to pupils to reflect on their own behaviour and response to events. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and play energetically. Their basic skills and economic awareness equip them satisfactorily for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage because staff assess children's learning well and plan interesting work. As a result, children make good progress.

Immediately prior to and during the school amalgamation, there was a very large turnover of staff. The headteacher welcomed external advice and staff training to improve teamwork and raise standards, particularly in English. As a result, planning and use of assessment in English is good and has led to a significant rise in standards this year. In mathematics, the impact of teachers' improved planning is beginning to bear fruit, but pupils' learning is satisfactory rather than good because they lack enough practice in solving problems and using mathematical language to explain their work. Teachers assess the needs of the large number of pupils who enter school during each year well, and it is to their credit that this group of pupils also progress satisfactorily. In addition, teachers, with help from well qualified and informed support staff, manage the inclusion of pupils from the 'special' units and other pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very well. This group make good progress.

Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to spur pupils' interest and learning. However, in science, teachers' confidence is lacking, planning is repetitive and pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn and use technical language through investigative work. As a result, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the Foundation Stage, it is rich and vibrant and children clearly enjoy and learn both indoors and outdoors. Pupils' personal, creative and health education development is promoted effectively with good contribution from community visitors. Opportunities for pupils to work with visiting artists and dance and drama specialists, together with weekly 'multiple intelligence' afternoons, enrich the curriculum very well, but extra curricular sporting activities, where pupils can extend and develop their skills, are currently very limited.

The strong emphasis on English, mathematics and ICT is helping to raise standards but the school has rightly identified that opportunities for investigative work and the associated use of vocabulary, particularly in mathematics and science, need to be increased.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall, the school provides good quality care, support and guidance for pupils, so they feel safe and can concentrate well on their learning. Procedures to ensure child protection and health and safety are comprehensive and well known by all staff. The school caters well for vulnerable pupils, including the unusually large number of pupils who come and go during the school year. Pupils are known as individuals and feel confident that there is someone to go to if they have concerns. They are also helped to develop strategies to cope with their own difficulties. One carer wrote, 'If I could give 20 out of 10, that's what I would give the staff!' The quality of teachers' marking and use of targets is variable and is not always good enough to provide pupils with the help they need to improve their work, although in class, verbal guidance is generally good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the experienced headteacher and her deputy is good. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate in almost all respects. However, the inspection found that pupils' personal development was good rather than satisfactory.

The headteacher is both far-sighted and practical. Her drive and energy since the amalgamation has successfully led to the creation of a good learning environment, improved pupil behaviour and higher standards in English; the three prime aims for the first two years of the new school. Information from monitoring provides a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. However, subject leaders have not yet had the opportunity to evaluate their areas and make further improvements except in English.

The governing body meet their responsibilities satisfactorily but does not have sufficiently strong links with subject leaders or year groups to form an independent view of the school's work. The school's capacity to improve is shown by improved pupils' progress this year, and it gives satisfactory value for money.

The questionnaires from parents show strong support for the way the school is run. Outstanding use is made of links with other agencies to enhance the school's provision, particularly for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are included very well in all the school has to offer. Pupils' learning is particularly enhanced by the new school building and the outdoor facilities, which are both first rate.

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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?	2	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	NA	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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	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?	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?	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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	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

Please thank all the children in school for being so helpful to us during our visit, and especially for listening and talking to us.

These are the things we liked the most:

- you are doing well in English because your teachers are planning really good lessons for you
- we think your behaviour is good and you look after each other really well
- we like the way the Year 6 children help you at lunchtimes and playtimes
- we believe you have a really good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy
- we think your school looks really good, inside and outside
- you are getting very good use out of the computers and interactive whiteboards.

We have asked your school to improve by doing these things now:

- give you more investigations and problem solving tasks in mathematics and science and help you to use more mathematical words to describe your work
- give you better targets that you understand so that your work improves further in mathematics and science
- asking your teachers to plan more interesting and exciting investigations for you to do in science.

Can you please make sure that you explain this letter to all the children in the school.