



Worthington Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106300
Local Authority Trafford
Inspection number 287476
Inspection date 22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Sarah Drake

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Worthington Road
School category	Community		Sale
Age range of pupils	3-11		Cheshire M33 2JJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 9733504
Number on roll (school)	317	Fax number	0161 9763210
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr S Robinson
		Headteacher	Mr C Searle
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2002		

Age group 3-11	Inspection date 22 November 2006	Inspection number 287476
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size school that serves a suburban area to the south of Manchester. Its popularity means that over half its pupils live outside the immediate neighbourhood, some in areas that have pockets of significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is lower than average but rising. Broadly average numbers belong to minority ethnic groups but none is at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need. The Nursery caters for 42 children, all of whom attend part time. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark 2, the Artsmark award and in October 2006 achieved the Healthy Schools Gold Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils very much enjoy coming to this good school as is shown in their good level of attendance and excellent behaviour. Staff, pupils, parents and governors all show great commitment to playing their part in meeting its mission statement, 'We Only Reach for The Highest'. The school has an accurate understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses, although it is modest about the quality of pupils' personal development. It provides very good value for money.

Pupils achieve well, both personally and academically. After some years of above average standards overall results at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 have fallen to broadly average over the past two years. Unusually high levels of staff absence accounted for by a high number on maternity leave and pupils joining or leaving the school, have had an impact on this. However, as the school recognises, standards in writing and mathematical problem solving are not high enough. Pupils of all abilities are currently making good progress because they are eager to learn and teachers plan interesting activities that make pupils want to work hard. With the challenges posed by mixed-age classes in every year group, the curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets pupils' changing needs as well as national initiatives. In their planning teachers make good use of the information gained from their assessment of pupils' progress in order to adapt activities for those of different ability. Lessons are interesting and move with a good pace that keeps pupils concentrating hard and determined to do their best. However, teachers do not yet use information and communication technology (ICT) sufficiently well to enhance pupils' enjoyment and allow them to practise their skills across a range of subjects.

Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage where staff are particularly skilled in developing role play and acting out different scenarios to help promote both their personal development and communication skills. The school places great importance on the development of personal skills, using the levels achieved by individuals by the end of Reception as an indicator of their potential for the end of Year 6. However, it does not track the acquisition of such skills and their impact on progress as pupils move through the school. This means that staff miss opportunities to identify at an early stage, and then take action to support, those pupils who are unlikely to fulfil their potential.

Parents are full of praise for the quality of care provided by the school and the way in which it helps their children to value others and to grow in self-confidence and their awareness of others' needs. Understandably, they attribute much of this to the exceptional role model provided by the headteacher. He combines sharp analytical qualities with openness and appreciation of others' skills that help to bring out the best in both staff and pupils. Senior managers and subject coordinators lead their areas of responsibility with vigour and imagination, ably helping their colleagues to review and improve their practice. All staff members are willing to try new ways of doing things because the reasons for doing so are clearly explained and based on sound evaluation of the current position. The school is outward looking and innovative in its work. It is a founder member of a charity that links older members of the local

population with schools. At Worthington, they help with reading and numeracy, and together with the children, are developing the Foundation Stage garden.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematical problem solving at both key stages, particularly for higher-ability pupils.
- Increase the use of ICT as a tool for learning across all subjects.
- Establish a system for monitoring the impact of pupils' personal development on progress and use the information it provides to ensure that individuals reach their full potential.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children enter Nursery with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, this overall picture masks a very wide range, with some children having significant weaknesses in their personal and communication skills. In the bright, orderly and supportive Foundation Stage environment they make good progress. Pupils' skill levels on entry to Year 1 vary from year to year but are usually broadly in line with expectations. In 2006, results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 showed a noticeable decline from previous years in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels for their age. The school's work to raise overall standards in English is having some effect but standards in writing and mathematical problem solving are not high enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are fully aware that they are at school to work hard and learn new things, and they take great pleasure in doing so. Relationships and behaviour are both excellent. Pupils are polite, considerate, keen to contribute to the community and appreciative of others' efforts. The result is a happy school, which has a strong family atmosphere. The Eco-School council has a big impact on school life. Members' input has led to healthier eating, paper recycling, and the introduction of the buddy system. Pupils of different ethnicity collaborate very well in lessons and at play. Year 6 pupils' journalistic writing, inspired by photographic images, exemplifies their interest in and good knowledge of world affairs. Collaborative working, for example with professional singers and pupils from special schools in a recently commissioned work 'Commotion in the Ocean', prepares pupils well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers throughout the school show great commitment and imagination in their efforts to help pupils succeed. Their planning always starts with consideration of what will interest the pupils, making learning relevant. Teachers give very clear directions and explanations, use questioning well to confirm pupils' understanding, and maintain a very good balance between allowing pupils sufficient time to think but not too much so their attention wanders. In response, pupils settle well in lessons and work in a sustained manner both independently and with partners. They develop good study skills, such as checking their work thoroughly to ensure that it meets the lesson objectives, or automatically moving on to the next piece of work rather than wasting time. Teaching assistants provide discrete support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers also make good use of other adult volunteers but do not yet fully exploit the possibilities of ICT as a tool for learning. They mark pupils' work thoroughly although they generally provide more helpful comments for improvement in English than in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum concentrates on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, with booster classes for those needing extra support, but it is also strong in other areas. High quality displays of pupils' work confirm that the school's Artsmark is well deserved. The strong links with other schools and clubs promote pupils' physical development well, as well as older pupils' learning of Spanish. Extra clubs are very popular and the school is highly successful in local tournaments. The importance placed on pupils' personal development permeates the whole of school life. Work with the police service's Crucial Crew raises pupils' awareness of how to act in an emergency. Visits and visitors are thoughtfully selected and enrich the pupils' learning well. The Foundation Stage curriculum is stimulating, well organised and successfully entices the youngest children to experiment, collaborate with others and grow in independence. With the new ICT suite up and running and a comprehensive scheme of work, pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their skills in discrete lessons. When ICT is planned into lessons in other subjects, pupils show great enthusiasm. For example, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 were enthralled by the programme based on football and athletics that helped them hone their skills in using fractions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know pupils very well as individuals and pupils say that they feel confident to approach adults with any concerns. All pupils are very clear about the school's expectations and older pupils confirm that 'The Worthington Way' has helped to raise

standards of behaviour to their current excellent level. There is good attention paid to helping children settle into the Foundation Stage and to preparing older pupils for the move to secondary school. Arrangements are firmly in place to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. Good liaison with parents and outside professionals underpins the support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who find self-discipline hard to achieve. Through teachers' marking and in class guidance, pupils are clear about whether or not they have achieved the learning objectives set for their work. However, some of the older pupils do not have a complete grasp of their longer-term targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good quality leadership and management have helped the school move forward well since the last inspection and ensure that it is far from complacent about its provision. The school regularly refines its procedures for assessing and monitoring standards and pupils' progress to make them as informative and easy to use as possible. However, it is recognised that there is more work to be done to improve standards. The school has good capacity to improve further. All staff contribute to development planning and the topics for staff meetings are based on different subject leaders' identified focus areas. The leadership at all levels provides good for further improvement. Monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work is rigorous but also highly supportive. Performance management relates both to school priorities and to individuals' personal aspirations. High quality administrative support, prudent financial management and leadership that is responsive to changes in the pupil population mean that the school uses its resources very effectively. Governors are well informed and ably fulfil their responsibilities. Many parents comment on the good levels of communication that they have with the school. This is a school where every child does matter, led by an outstanding headteacher who is tireless in his efforts to help his pupils succeed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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

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

I did enjoy my recent visit to your school. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and helping me to understand what it is like to be a pupil at Worthington. As you know, my visit was part of the inspection system for the whole country that assesses how well pupils are learning. You were right when you told me that yours is a good school.

The best things about Worthington are:

- everyone involved with the school works very hard to make it a happy place in which to learn
- you are polite, confident and thoughtful of others and your behaviour is excellent
- you enjoy learning because your teachers make lessons interesting and explain very clearly what you need to do
- you are good at getting on with your work and not wasting time so you all make good progress
- children in the Foundation Stage have a great start to their education
- all staff, following the outstanding example given by your headteacher, carefully think about how they can improve the school and are prepared to try different ways of doing things.

This is what your school needs to do next to make it even better:

- help you to achieve higher standards in writing and problem solving
- provide more opportunities for you to use ICT in other subjects
- keep a good eye on how well your personal skills are developing to make sure that you reach your full potential.

Your job will be to continue to enjoy learning, working hard and attending regularly.