



Over St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111263
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288907
Inspection date 10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Bamber

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Delamere Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Winsford
Age range of pupils	4-11		Cheshire CW7 2LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01606 592608
Number on roll (school)	141	Fax number	01606 861841
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs S McClellan
		Headteacher	Mrs ML Sheridan
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds, the vast majority of whom are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average and very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. Accommodation is quite cramped both in and outside the school. There is a stable staff and the school finds it fairly easy to recruit new staff when necessary. The school has Investors in People status, the Inclusive Quality Mark and the Fair Trade School status.

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. In its satisfactory self-evaluation it has been too modest, taking a rather narrow view of achievement and underestimating the impact on pupils' progress of recent improvements in teaching and learning and in aspects of management. Pupils' achievement and the standards they attain are now good. At the heart of what is good about the school are its Christian ethos and its positive and effective leadership. The headteacher ably leads a committed and harmonious team who work tirelessly to improve the school's provision and pupils' standards. The example set by the headteacher and deputy headteacher contributes very well to setting a positive model for behaviour, respect and endeavour. The school knows where it is going but plans to enhance provision are insufficiently focused on what pupils should be doing better. Because of the school's very positive ethos and effective programme for personal and social education, pupils relate very well to each other and generally feel safe and secure.

Pupils' personal development is good. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is often exemplary and they listen very attentively and strive to do their best. Pupils care for each other sensitively and willingly take on responsibilities around the school. They are prepared to voice their opinions and rightly express concerns about the lack of space in the playground and that certain areas should be reserved for particular activities, for example, the quiet area. It is because of this and the limited supervision that some pupils do not feel fully safe at lunchtime. Otherwise the quality of care and support pupils receive is very good. One parent commented, 'Things are picked up quickly and dealt with sensitively and as a result my child is very happy and getting on very well here.'

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Because teaching has improved well over the last two years, pupils make good progress and by the time they leave Year 6 attain above average standards. Recent good improvements in the achievement of more able pupils are testament to the more challenging teaching now in evidence, a factor which has eliminated previous underachievement by the brighter pupils. As a result of more rigorous systems to check on pupils' progress as they move from class to class, teachers now match the work they set to pupils' needs much more effectively. The efficient use of assessments and the skilful way in which learning is planned for children in the Reception class means they have a good start to their education.

Pupils enjoy learning because the good curriculum meets their needs, provides them with the basic skills for life and offers them many enriching experiences. They respond enthusiastically to a wide range of after school clubs, visitors and visits that help them to develop effective personal and social skills. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and of taking regular exercise. The school acknowledges that it should still do more to help pupils understand that subjects are linked closely and that they can usefully apply skills learnt in one area of the curriculum to help them do better in another.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The local authority, parents, and other schools are effective partners. Parents contribute well in supporting their children's learning, especially with homework. The strong links with pre-schools and secondary schools ensure smooth transfers and enhance the curriculum. The local authority has effectively supported improvements in teaching, learning and management. Governors fulfil their role well. They are knowledgeable, committed and assertive. The school offers good value for money, having made substantial progress since the last inspection, especially in teaching, provision in the Reception class and in increasing pupils' awareness of our multi-cultural society. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to understand better how the different subjects of the curriculum interrelate and give them more opportunities to apply the skills they learn in one subject to help them to achieve better in others.
- Improve lunchtime organisation and supervision in the playground so that pupils feel secure in the knowledge that there are certain areas that they can use which are set aside exclusively for particular activities.
- Make improvement plans more focused on how pupils' learning and achievement will be better as a result of the actions to be taken.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and have done so for the last two years. This represents good improvement on previous years when there was some underachievement particularly by more able pupils. Children enter the Reception class with broadly average skills and leave Year 6 with above average standards. In the Reception class they progress well, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. The latter stands them in good stead throughout the school as they mature into concerned young citizens. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2. All pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those who have learning or behavioural difficulties, make good progress and attain especially well in mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects the school's very positive Christian ethos. Pupils are usually thoughtful of others, for instance, older pupils look out for and play with younger ones. They enjoy contributing to the smooth running of the school, helping in assemblies and acting as monitors. Members of the school council are very proud that they compiled, with the help of their classmates, the school's code of conduct based on the principle of 'Respect!' They are also pleased that they have contributed considerably to healthier school lunches and to improved playground facilities. Pupils' very good behaviour in lessons plays a significant part in

their good achievements and enjoyment of learning. However, one or two follow their own code of conduct outside the classroom, particularly in the playground, where their failure to conform to 'the rules' sometimes upsets other pupils. Because they attend school regularly and arrive on time, pupils develop good work habits. These are further enhanced when they start up small businesses, making jewellery and cards that they sell for school funds.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons meticulously ensuring that the tasks set match pupils' needs well. They make the purpose of the lessons clear and usefully review what has been learned at the end of sessions to allow pupils to reflect on how well they have achieved. The good quality of teachers' marking and the use of individual and group learning targets contribute well to pupils' knowledge of what they need to do to improve their work. Although they often ask probing questions, teachers do not always require pupils to respond to them at sufficient length, in full sentences. This means that pupils have some difficulty composing and understanding complex sentences or unpicking written mathematical problems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' basic skills, their enjoyment of learning and their personal and social development are considerably enhanced by the good curriculum. It is in the area of links across the curriculum that there is a relative weakness in pupils' learning; pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply and practise skills learnt in one subject in others. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs from the Reception class to Year 6 and is considerably enriched by the many and varied out of class activities on offer. Residential visits make an outstanding contribution to pupils' ability to be independent, to work in teams, to accept responsibility and to forge new friendships. Considerable strides have been made since the last inspection in improving pupils' understanding of other faiths and societies, which have enhanced their spiritual and cultural awareness well. The teaching of French adds even more value to these aspects. Effective individual teaching plans have ensured that pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties progress well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents rightly feel that their children are well cared for and supported. One commented, 'Teachers are very quick to spot if things are not quite right, share their concerns with us and soon sort things out.' Systems to ensure child protection and to assess risk in and around the school meet requirements. As a result, pupils generally

feel safe and secure. The one exception is that they feel less safe at lunchtime in the playground. The rigorous systems to track pupils' progress, recently introduced throughout the school, have played a key role in improving pupils' achievements, especially those of the more able. Teachers are now in a much better position to match pupils' work to their specific needs. Effective systems to ensure good attendance and punctuality mean that pupils develop good habits which will stand them in good stead for the future.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good quality of the headteacher's leadership, of governance and of management systems has played a significant part in the considerable improvements made in pupils' achievements and in the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher has developed a strong teaching team who are determined to seek consistent improvements in standards. At the same time the personal, social and health development of all pupils is central to the school's work. This is fostered very well through the strong Christian ethos in the school. Rigorous systems to check on the performance of all staff ensure that most senior staff are aware of the strengths and relative weaknesses in provision. However, action plans at school and at subject level lack sufficient detail about how pupils' learning and achievement will improve.

The school's close partnerships with parents, other schools and the local authority play a major role in school improvement and in supporting pupils' learning and personal development.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit to your school. I very much enjoyed my day and these were some of the good things I found out about your school:

- you are so willing and keen to learn and to do your best
- you make good progress in your work
- you have many interesting things to do especially learning French, going on residential visits and the many after school clubs on offer to you
- you are friendly, get on well together and with your teachers and you are helpful around the school
- you have good teachers and your headteacher knows how to improve the school even more.

This is what I have asked your school to do to make it improve even more:

- to organise the playground better at lunchtime. You could help with that by respecting the quiet area more and by sticking to the rules about where to play certain games
- to help you understand more about how your subjects link together and how you can use the skills you learn in one subject to help you to do better in others
- to say exactly how plans for the future will help you to improve your work.

Thank you for helping me with the inspection of your school. I hope that you continue to really enjoy school and do very well with your work and carry on trying really hard.