

Tushingham-with-Grindley CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111285
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310556
Inspection dates	13–14 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Moncrieff
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Tushingham Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 4QS
Telephone number	01948 820360
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Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school located in a rural setting north of the market town of Whitchurch. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also lower than average. All pupils currently attending the school are White British. The school has achieved the Cheshire Healthy Schools Award. Since September 2007 the local authority has agreed to the trialling of part-time nursery provision during morning sessions. This provision is currently funded by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Tushingham provides pupils with a satisfactory, but improving, education. Their personal development is good. They enjoy the happy, family atmosphere in school and share good relationships with staff and each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show respect and concern for others and good awareness of other faiths and cultures. This is helped by occasional visitors to school and, for example, by pupils taking part in multicultural arts projects with local schools. Pupils' attendance is average. Their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils try very hard to gain the rewards offered and they claim that sanctions are hardly ever needed. They are always polite and courteous and are attentive and hard-working in lessons. They say that lessons are fun because teachers give them lots to do. Pupils are aware of the importance of keeping fit and maintaining a sensible diet. Even the youngest understand the 'five a day' rule. Playtimes are safe and active. Older pupils make sure that younger ones have their fair share of the available equipment to play with. All enjoy the fresh fruit and vegetable snacks and healthy lunch options which the school provides, though some suggest that healthier packed lunches could be encouraged more. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider communities. Some have responsible positions such as recycling or road safety officers and there are links with the church as well as local sports clubs and schools. As yet, however, there are no formal arrangements whereby pupils can have a voice in school affairs in order to develop workplace skills.

Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards at the end of Year 2 show a rising trend, due to improved teaching in that year group, and are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This rate of progress has not been maintained in Key Stage 2. Currently, standards at the end of Year 6 are average in English. They are below average in mathematics and science but are beginning to show signs of improvement. Recent training has improved teachers' subject knowledge and resulted in increased confidence. This has had a positive impact in bringing about an upturn in standards in all subjects at Key Stage 2. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Their particular needs are quickly identified and effective support boosts their personal and academic skills well. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some good and outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. However, teaching has not been effective enough over time to improve achievement and standards sufficiently, particularly for the more able pupils. Assessment and target setting have not been focused well enough on individual pupils' needs and although now improving, there is still some way to go. The curriculum satisfactorily meets most pupils' needs. There is sufficient focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The school is making good progress towards the introduction of French to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy what is offered after school but a number of parents express the view that more enrichment, particularly in sports, could be planned.

Leadership and management are satisfactory because the school has responded well to intervention and support from the local authority. Following a period of falling achievement owing to ineffective monitoring and evaluation, there is now clearer, more purposeful direction in the headteacher's leadership. Restructuring of the headteacher's role and increased staffing have released time for curriculum leaders to monitor, evaluate and plan improvements. This has brought about a renewed resolve among staff and a strong commitment to raising achievement and standards. Measures have already been taken to improve teaching quality, and standards are beginning to rise. Performance management is now linked to teachers'

professional development. This has led to more confident approaches to teaching and increasing expectations among teachers. Systems for monitoring standards and quality of provision, although relatively new, have enabled leaders to form a broadly accurate view of the school's work. Targets for pupils to reach standards expected for their age were met in 2007 but the school recognises that sharper target setting is needed to ensure that the more able pupils reach their potential. Governors provide increasingly effective support and challenge for the school and are vigorously seeking, through training, to compensate for their overall lack of experience in governance. They manage finances well to ensure satisfactory value for money. Parents are largely supportive of the school and many comment on the quality of care provided. A significant number, however, feel that their views are not recognised. Although improvements in leadership and management are evident it is still too early to gauge the full impact of measures taken on achievement and standards. There is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's knowledge and skills on entry to Reception are below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They make good progress because of the good teaching they receive and almost all reach the national expectation by the time they enter Year 1.

The new provision for children of Nursery age is working well. They quickly settle into daily routines and develop good personal, social and emotional skills. They benefit from the role models presented by Reception children as they work independently alongside them in role play or, for example, at the writing table. All children are confident and eager to learn because there is a good range of activities for them to choose from. Those activities led by teaching staff are well focused and challenging. There is a good emphasis on learning letter sounds, and Reception children link sounds to make simple words. Early number skills also show good progress. For example, a group of children enjoyed counting the number of blocks they used to build a tower before it toppled. Development of skills is assessed carefully to enable teachers to plan the next steps of children's learning. Relationships with parents are good. Parents appreciate the welcoming atmosphere of the Foundation Stage and are pleased with their children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.
- Use assessment and target setting more effectively, especially to challenge the more able pupils.
- Embed current initiatives for improvement and evaluate their impact rigorously.
- Formalise procedures for taking account of pupils' and parents' views.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve well up to the end of Year 2, where standards have risen for the past two years to above average. This good progress matches the quality of teaching provided for pupils in

Key Stage 1. Progress through the school has not been consistent, however, and achievement and standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be. This is because of weaknesses in monitoring and target setting and lack of challenge for the more able pupils. 2007 national test data show an improvement over previous years in all subjects. Although standards in English are now average there is still ground to be gained in mathematics and science. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to their individual learning programmes. They receive well managed and sensitive support to help them achieve alongside others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and by the end of Year 6 they are confident and self-assured. They take their responsibilities seriously and show genuine concern for others. They have a strong sense of what is, and what is not, acceptable. They hold clear views, for example about the unacceptable nature of bullying and racism. Pupils willingly help with day-to-day tasks in school. Some Year 6 pupils sent written applications to the Foundation Stage teacher asking, officially, if they could look after the young children during lunchtimes. Politeness and good manners are features of their outstanding behaviour. While pupils confidently express their individual views in school, they do not play as full a part in its life as they could. This is because there are no systems in place whereby the collective views of pupils can be channelled into actions to improve school provision.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although there are increasing strengths in teaching and learning there are inconsistencies which limit the overall impact on achievement and standards. Recent training has encouraged teachers to be more open to a wider range of strategies and resources. Despite some remaining small areas of uncertainty, this is beginning to have positive results. Lessons are usually planned well and take account of pupils' varying abilities. However, in Key Stage 2 teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what the more able pupils can achieve on their own. As a result, the pace of learning slackens in some lessons because teachers unnecessarily involve pupils in discussion about what they already understand. In all lessons, relationships are very good. Pupils know that their ideas are valued and this makes them more willing to 'have a go'. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in classrooms and in extra sessions for small groups who need to boost their skills. The best practice in marking is not consistent throughout the school so not all pupils are given clear day-to-day guidance about how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum adequately provides for most pupils' needs. It is enriched by the inclusion of French and a typical range of visits to support learning. The development of literacy across subjects is satisfactory. There is some good independent recording of science investigation in Key Stage 2. Currently, there is a strong focus on problem solving in mathematics following a question analysis of most recent national test papers. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is firmly established. Pupils learn about possible dangers they

might encounter with regard to drugs and other substances as well as the importance of secure relationships. They are satisfactorily prepared to deal with situations regarding their personal well-being. There is a limited range of after school clubs throughout the year. Pupils enjoy the activities currently offered but there is scope to increase opportunities for pupils to nurture their different skills and interests outside of lesson time.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are strong features of pastoral care which ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for in school. Parents agree overwhelmingly that their children are properly looked after. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is very sensitive to their particular emotional needs. Staff members know the pupils well and give every encouragement to help them achieve their best. Pupils are given clear guidance about safe relationships and, consequently, break times are free of bullying and aggression. Procedures for safeguarding pupils in school are in place. Academic support and guidance is not as strong as pastoral care. Current assessment systems are relatively new. Information is used to set group targets. The school recognises the need to set more specific targets to ensure that individual pupils, especially those who are more able, are fully challenged.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Timely intervention by the local authority has halted faltering achievement and standards and boosted staff morale. There is now a corporate approach to school improvement through which all staff and governors understand their areas of accountability. A development plan has been written which provides a useful guide for school leaders. The right priorities for improvement are identified but the plan is not yet sufficiently specific about how actions will improve outcomes for pupils. The school has been slow to respond to some of the issues from the last inspection. Progress seen has been achieved over a relatively short period of time. Standards in mathematics and science, the use of assessment and relationships with parents with regard to listening to all views still require some further improvement. Governors are supportive of the school and are developing their role as critical partners by working with staff to monitor progress.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am sure you will remember that I visited your school recently to see how well you are learning. I enjoyed my visit because every one of you made me feel so welcome. I was extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour and your good manners. I enjoyed talking to you about your school and you helped me to find out a great deal. I noticed how smiley you all are. That told me how much you enjoy being there.

You have a satisfactory school and, overall, you make satisfactory progress. Teachers are working hard to make lessons as much fun as possible for you. Grown-ups in school take good care of you and you take good care of each other.

Naturally, your parents, teachers and school governors would like your school to be even better. I discussed ways of doing this with your headteacher and we had a few ideas. First of all everyone is going to work very hard (including you!) to help you to reach better standards in mathematics and science by the time you leave. In order to do that your teachers will set really challenging targets for you all and check that you make the right kind of progress towards them. Your headteacher will also check that ideas for making the school better are really working and will find more ways to listen to ideas from you and your parents. You can help by continuing to be as happy and hard-working as you are already.