

Norley CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111249
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	325328
Inspection date	22 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	65
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Condiut
Headteacher	Mrs A Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hough Lane Norley Frodsham Cheshire WA6 8JZ
Telephone number	01928 788471
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of provision, the skills children acquire and the progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage; the achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 and the degree to which pupils, especially in Key Stage 2 are involved in assessing their own work and in target-setting. The inspectors gathered evidence from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes. The school was observed at work and discussions were held with members of staff, pupils and governors. Replies to parents' questionnaires were also considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not considered in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a small school in a village setting. Many of the pupils who attend are from relatively advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. All pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises Reception age children being taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is a lot smaller than normal. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak any first language other than English. Around an average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities but none has a statement of special educational need. The school has a number of awards which reflect its expertise in the arts and in promoting healthy and active lifestyles. Since the last inspection the school has been federated with a similarly sized school in a nearby village. These federated schools share the same governing body.

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 which pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the excellent care, guidance and support they receive. Good quality teaching and an enriching curriculum contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement and above average standards. Within the good overall quality of leadership and management, the headteacher's ambition and perceptiveness result in a clear vision for future improvement.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) with skills expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the school achieving well to reach at least above and sometimes well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The Artsmark Silver Award is reflected in pupils' very good art and in the school's emphasis on music and drama. The school's good improvement since the last inspection is exemplified by the good improvements made in standards and achievement in mathematics, especially by more able pupils in Key Stage 1.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Their above average attendance reflects how much they enjoy school. In lessons, pupils seize every opportunity to contribute and warmly celebrate each other's success. In a Year 3 /4 English lesson, the class hugely enjoyed a fellow pupil's humorous reading of an extract from his diary. Members of the school council work hard to initiate improvements to the school's provision. They are immensely proud of their contribution to the healthy meals now served at lunchtime. The Healthy School's award and the Activemark testify to pupils' keen awareness of the benefits of a balanced diet and regular exercise. Pupils feel safe and through their roles as buddies contribute very well to the welfare and safety of younger or less confident pupils. The extremely positive atmosphere in the playground and around the school results from pupils' impeccable behaviour and very warm relationships. Pupils are fully involved in their local community. They have close links both with children in their partner school and those in a school in South Africa.

Good teaching is exemplified by extremely positive relationships which mean that teachers can teach and pupils can learn without fuss or disruption. Such harmony results in pupils' good academic achievement and excellent conduct. Most of the work set challenges pupils of all abilities and matches their needs well. Effective and well planned interventions, made possible by the school's rigorous tracking systems, mean that any pupil with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or at risk of not progressing as well as possible, receives the appropriate support that enable them to achieve well. Currently, teachers' use of targets to involve pupils in their own learning and assessment of how well they are progressing are not used as well as they might be. Some pupils find the wording of the targets difficult to understand and others are not clear about how much progress they have made towards meeting them.

Pupils have a wide range of interesting experiences that promote their engagement and enjoyment in learning. Apart from the strong emphasis on the arts, pupils have opportunities to go on visits that are linked to their studies. They also attend residential venues where they learn to be more independent, to work collaboratively in teams and to take on challenges which test their self-confidence. They are taught French which promotes well their very good cultural development. Those pupils who have a gift or a talent are given opportunities to flourish by attending special classes. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which enhance pupils' physical and aesthetic development.

The school ensures that all requirements as regards safeguarding, child protection and risk assessment are met. The high quality pastoral care provided delights parents and ensures that pupils are safe, confident and that any problems are happily resolved. Systems to ensure regular attendance and good behaviour work very well. The school has strong partnerships with external agencies that contribute extremely well to the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those with a gift or talent. Close links with the local high school provide expertise in sport and ensure smooth transfer arrangement to secondary school.

The headteacher, despite dividing her time between the two federated schools, is highly influential in maintaining a most positive ethos, in seeking further improvements in pupils' achievements and in the quality of provision. She is well supported in this by her deputy headteacher and other middle leaders. Governance is good. Governors provide support and challenge in equal measure and represent the views of parents and pupils effectively. They have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas needing development and monitor the school's work appropriately. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate, providing a sound foundation for identifying areas for improvement. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and celebrates diversity. Its promotion of community cohesion is strong. There is close cooperation between the federated schools, the local community is embraced, for example, through sourcing local produce for school lunches, and international contacts are established. The school's record of sustained improvement since the last inspection and its current effective provision illustrate its good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception from a wide range of Nursery and pre-school settings with broadly expected skills. They make good progress and enter Year 1 working securely within or beyond the level of the nationally set early learning goals. Parents are very impressed with the arrangements the school makes to settle children happily into Reception. 'My child settled in very quickly and is always happy to go to school', is a typical comment.

Children make good gains in their learning as a result of effective teaching and support. They develop a strong sense of independence and because of strong teaching of phonics (letter sounds) they progress particularly well in their speaking and reading skills. Although a significant minority initially find sharing and taking turns difficult, these children quickly learn to consider the needs of others as well as their own. Although there is a wealth of suitable resources to promote children's imaginative play both in and out of doors, there are some restrictions placed on the full implementation of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. This is because of children being taught in the same class as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. This is particularly the case as regards children's limited opportunities to make choices and to have access to the outdoor area at all times. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator leads and manages provision well, but currently is constrained by the lack of full-time adult support for children in Reception. Children's progress is reviewed regularly and activities subsequently well matched to their needs. Welfare arrangements meet requirements fully and children feel safe and secure. Adults know children extremely well and liaise closely with parents, involving them in ironing out any difficulties and in supporting their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with more opportunities to choose and to access activities both in and out of doors.

- Improve the use of targets so that all pupils understand them and are more closely involved in evaluating how much progress they make towards them.

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

I would like to thank you very much for welcoming the other inspector and myself when we visited your school recently to see how well you are educated. It was a delight to chat with you and to observe you at work.

You go to a good school and some aspects of your education are excellent. You behave exceptionally well and develop into mature, confident young people who have a strong sense of community and who form strong and positive relationships. I was very impressed with your keenness to learn in lessons and how enthusiastic you were about clubs and visits. You spoke very positively about your teachers and the lovely family atmosphere in school. You are taught well and the school is particularly good at helping you to develop your artistic and musical skills. The school is well run and it is benefiting from the partnership with Kingsley St John's.

It is part of my job to suggest to the school ways of making it even better. To do this I have asked your headteacher and the other adults who run the school to do the following things.

- Make sure that children in Reception have more opportunities to choose what they do and that they can play and work outside more often.
- Set you targets which you fully understand and for teachers to talk about them more often with you so that you know how close you are to reaching them.