

Sound and District Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111074
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	356860
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Balaam
Headteacher	Miss Jo Grundy
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons or parts of lessons were observed, taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and a variety of documentation, particularly that related to safeguarding and pupils' progress. Questionnaires were scrutinised from staff, Key Stage 2 pupils and from 84 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The reasons for variation in pupils' progress in different subjects, particularly for high attaining pupils.
- The extent to which the school promotes community cohesion beyond the local area.
- The role of subject leaders in driving improvements.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school in a rural location. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies considerably between year groups, but is below average overall. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

There is a pre-school provision on the school site, as well as before-and after-school clubs. These are managed privately and are inspected and reported upon separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education for its pupils so that they achieve well and enjoy school. The provision in the Reception class is exceptionally good, and gives children a really secure foundation for their future time in school. From the start, they feel safe and happy in school, and this is reflected in their high attendance. Pupils go on to make good progress across the rest of the school, so that standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently above average, and are particularly strong in reading. Relative weaknesses in the past, the progress of more-able pupils and of those who struggle with their work, have been addressed well. These pupils now make the same good progress as their classmates. A key to this is the consistent use by teachers of improved assessment information to match work to different pupils' needs, particularly in English and mathematics.

Good teaching in all the classes leads to pupils' good learning. An interesting curriculum, with a wide range of enrichment activities, including many popular after-school clubs, supports pupils' enjoyment and progress. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers continually monitor pupils' progress in class, so they can provide help to any who are struggling, and also challenge pupils who do well, to improve their work further. The marking of pupils' work clearly tells them what has been successful, and what could have been done better. However, pupils are not always shown how they could extend their work in future, and so raise their standards further.

The school is a very harmonious community where pupils are happy and settled. They have very good relationships with each other and with staff. The school's good care, guidance and support for pupils underpins this well, particularly through the adults' consistent reinforcement of positive social and moral values. Behaviour is good and pupils develop well as responsible, caring young people as they move through the school. Older pupils feel genuine responsibility for their younger schoolmates, and are kind and considerate towards them. Pupils are accepting of other's views, and are interested in the world around them. Through the recent link with a school in France, older pupils are very enthusiastic about their pen-pals. However, pupils have too few opportunities to interact with people from the wide range of contrasting communities in this country.

The school has a good capacity to sustain its strengths and improve further. Clear direction from the headteacher and the governing body has driven improvements well since the last inspection. The school has increasingly good systems to evaluate its effectiveness, and plans successfully to address any shortcomings. For example, it has accurately identified that subject leaders have too few opportunities to work alongside their colleagues in the classroom. Subject leaders work conscientiously to provide the best support they can for colleagues, with some success in making improvements. However, other than in English and mathematics, leaders lack detailed information about standards and provision in their subjects.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about and interact with people from contrasting communities within Great Britain.
- Make the marking of pupils' work more effective by consistently indicating to pupils how they can improve their work in the future.
- Increase the effectiveness of subject leaders by:
 - - giving them opportunities to share their expertise with colleagues by working alongside them in the classroom
 - - devising systems for them to monitor the quality of provision and outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter reception with overall standards that usually meet national expectations or, for some cohorts, exceed them. Good progress ensures that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is at least above average, and is high in some years. Variations in standards from year to year stem from the different starting points of different cohorts. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their classmates because of the carefully tailored extra support provided and the tight match of tasks to their needs. The increased level of challenge for more-able pupils means that they also do well. In a lesson for Years 5 and 6, all pupils made good progress in using different units because different groups were given work of varying difficulty to match their abilities. They worked diligently, tried hard with challenging problems, and their behaviour was excellent. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils threw themselves enthusiastically into making paintings and chalk drawings of fireworks. They did well because of the enthusiasm the teacher had generated, and they took a pride in their success. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used computers very effectively and independently when manipulating different features of text to make an interesting poster about a residential centre.

Pupils thrive socially, as well as academically, in this school. Their social and moral development is excellent, and pupils in Year 6 explain articulately not just how they should behave, but also why. They take a great pride in the help they give to their 'buddies' in the Reception class, and interact with them kindly and sensitively. Many aspects of pupils' cultural development are good, but this aspect is judged to be only satisfactory overall because of their limited understanding of the wide range of communities in modern Britain. Pupils contribute well to the school community formally through the school council, and informally through their good behaviour and their kindness and consideration for each other. They participate enthusiastically in events locally and in nearby towns. Pupils are confident that they are safe in school, and say they would not hesitate to ask the adults for help if they had worries. They have a good understanding of healthy eating, and are extremely keen on exercise, taking a pride in the school's sporting achievements, as well as at their own individual successes in the regular Golden Mile activity.

Pupils have good collaborative skills, but can also work well independently when appropriate. They work conscientiously in class, take a pride in their achievements and have good basic skills, including in using information and communication technology. This gives them a good basis for their future lives in school and beyond.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage classes well, based on clearly established routines and expectations, and good personal relationships with pupils. As a result, lessons are orderly and productive and pupils learn at a good pace. Assessment information is used well, particularly in matching work to pupils' different needs, although there are some inconsistencies in marking. Teachers explain things well, often using the interactive whiteboard effectively to clarify explanations and to focus pupils' attention. Good strategies are used to involve all pupils in sessions, such as the number fans used in a lesson with Year 2. These ensured that all pupils were actively engaged and gave the teacher immediate feedback about their understanding. Some excellent use is made of pupils' speaking and listening skills to sort out their ideas in discussion, although occasionally opportunities to do this are missed.

The curriculum enthuses pupils because it involves them in a variety of practical activities, gives them good opportunities to use computers and provides a wide array of well-attended extra-curricular activities. It is modified to meet pupils' varying and specific needs. The provision for learning French is being greatly enhanced by pupils' opportunities to interact with pupils in a school in the Haute Savoie. Pupils particularly enjoy the theme weeks, such as the literacy week, when a hot air balloon, landed on the field, generated great enthusiasm and speculation. Visits out are popular, with pupils in Year 2 describing their visit to the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester as 'amazing!'

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The pastoral care for pupils is strong, with good use made of outside partners and agencies to support those who need extra help. The employment by the school of their own speech and language teacher, for example, has led to notable improvements in the well-being and progress of pupils with particular needs. Pupils said that they are confident, not only that the adults will look after them, but that other pupils will help them if there are problems. Procedures to promote attendance are good, but the main key to pupils' high attendance is the way they enjoy school and are helped to feel safe and secure.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led and managed and has built on its strengths from the previous inspection and successfully addressed any shortcomings identified then. The much improved tracking of pupils' progress, and the involvement of all teachers in this process, has meant that the school can respond quickly to the needs of any individuals who start to fall behind. Rigorous monitoring of teaching by senior leaders means that staff are given clear feedback on their performance, and effective support is provided to help individuals address any weaknesses in their practice. Subject leaders make a positive contribution to driving improvements. The school has identified some gaps in the role of these leaders and has plans to address them. Equal opportunities are promoted well and procedures to eliminate any discrimination are good. The results can be seen in the narrowing of the gap between the performance of pupils of different abilities, so that all now do well.

The governing body is supportive and is involved well in school life. It has a good understanding of the school's effectiveness, and is increasingly confident in challenging staff and holding the school to account. Members have a secure understanding of safeguarding arrangements, which are good. Documentation is of good quality, particularly the leaflets produced to give apposite and useful advice to different members of the community on key aspects of safeguarding. The school is proactive in seeking external help to improve its systems, such as the recent involvement of the local crime prevention officer in giving specialist advice.

Good arrangements are in place to help parents and carers be involved in school life. The school responds positively to their suggestions by modifying practice when appropriate. Other partners help the school to improve its provision, often in enabling activities that such a small school would otherwise find difficult. For example, the strong links with other local schools enabled the recent collaborative work on moderating teachers' assessments of pupils' progress, to make them more accurate and reliable. Community cohesion is strong within the school and locally, and understanding of communities abroad is being

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extended through the proposed link with an orphanage in Russia. However, links with different communities in Great Britain are limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make extremely good progress during their time in the Reception class, and as a result their attainment when they go into Year 1 has exceeded the national average in the last few years. Children greatly enjoy their opportunities to play and work at a wide range of exciting activities indoors and out. They cooperate very well, their behaviour is good and they have warm, secure relationships with the staff. The excellent provision for their welfare is enhanced by good transition arrangements from the variety of pre-school settings. The positive relationships they have formed with 'buddies' in Year 6 give them confidence when joining in with whole-school activities. The class is extremely well managed and organised, and adults plan together to make maximum use of their expertise. Major improvements have been made to the outside area, to equipment and to practice over the last few years. These have raised the good progress observed at the time of the last inspection, to the current high level. Staff continually assess children's progress and plan the curriculum carefully to meet their needs and interests. Children's own views, as well as those of their parents and carers and the staff, feed into the excellent learning journey books, which form a permanent record of their progress. There is a very good balance between activities that are teacher-directed and those that are child-chosen. A major strength is the way in which the adults helpfully intervene in children's play to build on their interests and enhance their learning. Adults are extremely skilled in this, asking relevant questions and encouraging children to extend their thinking and their vocabulary. Children develop high levels of independence, but also sit and listen attentively when required. For example, when they watched four classmates perform the

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story of Goldilocks, which they had rehearsed with great enjoyment outdoors, with one of the adults sensitively helping them to structure and understand their performance.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a high rate of return of questionnaires. The very large majority of parents and carers are positive about the school and the education it provides. They particularly value that their children are safe and happy in school, and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. A few parents and carers are concerned that poor behaviour is not dealt with appropriately. Some of these worries appear to relate to the behaviour of a tiny minority of pupils who find conforming to accepted norms difficult. Inspection evidence indicates that the school maintains a very good balance between the needs of these individuals and those of the majority. The inspectors observed good behaviour during the inspection, and pupils, in discussion, said that when their classmates were silly they were confident that the adults would deal with it at once. A few parents and carers also felt that their suggestions and concerns were not always acted upon. The school provided evidence of a number of ways in which practice has been changed as a result of parents' and carers' views, with others planned in the coming months.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sound and District Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 127 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	63	32	33	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	59	61	36	38	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	30	56	58	9	9	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	40	49	51	6	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	46	48	42	44	5	5	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	41	50	52	3	3	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	61	34	35	2	2	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	42	41	43	6	6	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	47	41	43	4	4	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	31	47	49	12	13	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	30	53	55	12	13	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	41	43	45	47	6	6	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	53	41	43	2	2	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 November 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sound and District Primary School, Nantwich, CW5 8AE

Thank you for all your help and your warm welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and learning what you thought. You told us that you enjoyed school and thought that you were learning a lot, and you are right.

Your school gives you a good education. You make good progress because the teachers are skilled at helping you to learn. Your teachers give you interesting things to do and make sure that you get work that is right for you. I know that you all particularly enjoy the visits you make, and the special themed weeks, such as when the hot air balloon landed. You behave well and all get along together very happily. It was pleasing to see how well you all help each other, and how well the older pupils take care of younger ones. It was very impressive how hard you all work at exercise in the Golden Mile.

The adults organise the school well, and are keen to make it even better. We have agreed on three things that they are going to concentrate on to do this. First, they are going to give you more chances to meet with and learn about all the different people in this country. Second, when teachers mark your books, they are going to give you more advice about how you can get better in future. Third, the teachers who are in charge of different subjects are going to spend more time working in each other's classes, so they know more about how things are going in their subjects.

You can help by keeping up your hard work and good behaviour, and by following the advice teachers give you in your books. Thank you again for all your help.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead inspector

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