

Nether Alderley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111019
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378218
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Wall

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Olive Fenton
Headteacher	Richard Craven
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Wall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by one additional inspector. The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons taught by four members of staff. A sample of pupils' written work was also inspected. Pupils' conduct during playtimes and lunchtimes was observed. The inspector held meetings with staff, pupils, a group of parents and carers, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's evaluation of its effectiveness; the school development plan; attendance and behavioural records; and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The inspector analysed 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Nether Alderley is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few speak English as an additional language but none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils who leave and/or join the school at other than normal times is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age, mixed-ability classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for children of reception age. The school has Eco-School status. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school provides pre-and after-school care provision that is managed privately. This provision is inspected and reported on 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires value the school highly. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop into exceptionally confident, articulate, courteous and caring young people by the time they leave. The school is improving securely but is not yet outstanding because there is not yet enough outstanding teaching and achievement is good.
- Children make good progress and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment is above average. It is higher in mathematics than in English. However, the gap is narrowing rapidly because the school has a strong and effective focus on improving pupils' writing skills. All pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and form strong working relationships with their classes so that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. However, there are a few shortcomings. For example, tasks are not always matched closely to pupils' ages and abilities, and pupils are sometimes uncertain about what is expected of them in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around school. They enjoy school greatly and this is seen in their consistently above average attendance. Pupils say how very safe they feel in school and that they are exceptionally well cared for by the adults working with them.
- Good leadership and management, including rigorous and committed governance, ensures that accurate evaluation of the school's work and effective performance management are used astutely to improve teaching and to drive further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' achievement through increasing the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - pupils are always appropriately challenged according to their differing abilities and ages
 - learning objectives are always made clear to pupils so that they can work independently with full understanding of what is expected of them
 - current best teaching practice is used more effectively to raise further the quality of teaching across the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achieve well. They make good and improving progress as they move up through the school. In lessons pupils are eager to learn. Their outstanding behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning ensure that lessons are free from disruption. Pupils are industrious and strive to give of their best. They take great pride in the presentation of their written work. They enjoy working independently and apply themselves to challenging tasks diligently. Pupils listen respectfully to the views of others. They are always keen to answer questions and listen respectfully to the views of others.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally in line with age-related expectations. They make good progress because teaching is good and the range of activities provided both indoors and outdoors is stimulating and appropriate to their needs. Good progress is maintained through Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of both key stages attainment is above average, especially in mathematics. Attainment in English is rising rapidly and securely because the school has a sharp and effective focus on improving pupils' writing skills. Leaders and managers have developed very sophisticated procedures for checking on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. As a result support is provided quickly when need is identified. End of Key Stage 1 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics have been made much more accurate by the targeted use of professional development and independent moderation to give a much more accurate assessment of pupils' progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Data provided by the school and confirmed by inspection findings show that progress is accelerating rapidly and securely, especially in writing. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the effective support they receive. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is good. As a result pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in reading is above average. The overwhelming majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers show satisfaction with the progress their children are making. The inspector agrees with this.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and improving. The vast majority of parents and carers are rightly pleased with the teaching their children receive. Pupils also value highly the quality of teaching. The

school is rightly keen to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding to raise attainment further and to enable pupils to progress at an even faster rate.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It provides a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities that prepare children well for future learning. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good with some that is outstanding. Shortcomings have been tackled rigorously and this is bringing about a positive impact on accelerating pupils' progress. Teaching benefits from an outstanding curriculum. Topic work is used very effectively to capture pupils' interest and provide them with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills across subjects, especially in extended writing. Teaching and the curriculum provide pupils with many opportunities to reflect on current world events, other cultures, and those who are less fortunate than themselves, with the result that pupils develop exceptionally mature social and cultural awareness.

Teaching uses questioning effectively to make children think and to justify their answers. This develops well pupils' ability to express themselves clearly and confidently. Teachers forge very strong relationships with their classes. They use assessment information increasingly effectively to match tasks to the needs, ages and abilities of pupils. However, the level of challenge is sometimes too high or too low and this acts as a brake on accelerating progress at an even faster rate. Teachers plan their lessons well to include a variety of activities that keep pupils actively engaged. However, pupils sometimes struggle when set to work on tasks independently because learning objectives are not always made clear enough to show pupils exactly what is expected of them. When teaching is outstanding, it is exciting and pitched just at the right level. For example, in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson on using fractions and decimals, pupils were enthralled by the teacher's use of the television programme 'Deal or No Deal' to illustrate the point and prepare them thoroughly for a range of appropriately challenging tasks. Pupils roared ahead with the tasks and rose to the challenge with confidence and enjoyed solving them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. This is an exceptionally harmonious school in which respect and tolerance are at the forefront of all interactions. Nearly all questionnaires returned by parents and carers show that behaviour is a positive strength of the school. Pupils state that lessons are rarely, if ever, disrupted by any bad behaviour. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. This was borne out by inspection observations and by school records relating to behaviour since the previous inspection. Older pupils take pride in caring for younger pupils. Pupils have a solid grasp of what is right and wrong and strive at all times to live up to the high standards of conduct the school sets and expects. Pupils say that bullying of any kind simply does not happen and is unthinkable because, as one pupil put it succinctly, 'We do not have the right to treat anyone badly because they are different. It just does not belong here in school.' Pupils feel very aware that the adults are there to help and support them and say they would have every confidence in approaching staff with any problems. Pupils who are disabled or whose circumstances make them vulnerable are treated with unerring respect and are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils have an exceptionally high awareness of staying safe. They know what constitutes unsafe situations and how to avoid or tackle them. They are acutely aware of the potential dangers of using the internet.

Pupils' positive attitudes towards school and their high levels of enjoyment are mirrored in their consistently above average levels of attendance and excellent punctuality.

Leadership and management

Good and improving leadership and management provide the school with a sharp focus on improvement and a clear vision for future development. Accurate self-evaluation informs good quality strategic planning that provides a step-by-step pathway to successful implementation of its aims and objectives. The governing body provides highly effective support and holds the school increasingly rigorously to account. Since the previous inspection the outstanding quality of pupils' behaviour and personal development and their good achievement have been maintained, testifying to the school's good capacity for further improvement. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and rigorously. Professional development of staff is effective in driving up the quality of teaching and learning, although best practice is not shared as widely as it could be. Leaders and managers have tightened procedures for tracking pupils' progress towards demanding targets. As a result pupils are much clearer about the progress that is expected of them and what they need to do to improve their learning.

The curriculum is outstanding because it plays a pivotal role in raising standards, especially in writing, and promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development outstandingly well. Excellent use is made of partnerships to extend and enrich opportunities for extra-curricular activities, especially with other schools, to provide pupils with a wealth of memorable opportunities. For example, pupils were eager to recount their recent experiences of the 'Arts Work' undertaken with one local high school and other local primary schools. They were exceptionally proud of the video made of their impressive dance routines before a large and very appreciative audience. Clubs and societies involving pupils and parents and carers are very popular Thursday afternoon activities. They include gardening, Lego, badminton and sewing. The school orchestra plays regularly in the local community and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' excellent cultural awareness and development. Relationships with parents and carers are very strong. A few parents and carers expressed some individual concerns about some aspects of the school's work. The inspector raised these with leaders and managers and was satisfied that the school has responded appropriately.

Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively and results in all groups of pupils being fully integrated into the life of the school and in all pupils making good and improving progress. Procedures for protecting children are exemplary.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



29 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nether Alderley Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 4TR

Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. You were all unfailingly polite and courteous. I was very impressed with how well you behave and how well you all get on together and with the adults working with you. It was obvious how much you enjoy school and how proud of it you are. This was evident in your good attendance – well done!

You go to a good and improving school. Although your school is smaller than most schools, it provides you with an outstanding range of exciting things to do. I especially enjoyed watching the video of your dance routines during the recent Arts Week; something you will never forget!

You make good and improving progress and achieve well because of the good teaching you receive. I was pleased to see that your writing skills are improving rapidly and that they are now nearly as good as your skills in mathematics. In order to help you learn even better, I am asking your school to increase the amount of outstanding teaching you receive by making sure that: the work you do is always hard enough and never too easy; you are always clear about how to tackle your work successfully when you work on your own; and that the best teaching in the school is used more effectively as a model of best practice across the school.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure your school goes from strength to strength in the coming years.

I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall
Lead inspector

