

# Tarvin Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111110
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	378236
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lyn Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2007
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Drake  
Paul Latham

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by nine different teachers, including a series of sessions to promote pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds. They held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body and two groups of pupils, and spoke informally to a small number of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management such as pupils' work, tracking data, self-evaluation and development planning. They also took account of the responses made to the inspection questionnaires returned by pupils, members of staff and 74 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average-sized primary school serves a village to the east of Chester. The great majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standard expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. It holds many awards including Artsmark gold, Sing Up silver, Active Mark and International school, and has gained quality marks for Inclusion and Basic Skills.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2011, after acting in post for one term. In September 2011 the new role of deputy headteacher was established, with the responsibilities shared between two senior teachers. In the same month two new teachers joined the school.

A privately run nursery shares the school site. This did not form part of this inspection but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because pupils' progress in writing is less strong than in reading and mathematics and because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Outstanding leadership and management have brought about impressive improvements in a wide range of areas, which are much appreciated by pupils, staff, parents and carers. In the words of one parent, 'There is an enthusiastic atmosphere which generates a willingness and motivation to learn.'
- Pupils' achievement is good. In response to recent actions the rate of progress for pupils of all abilities has increased well overall, but there are too few examples of pupils writing at length. The accurate use of grammar and the presentation of older pupils' work are not always of sufficiently high quality.
- The quality of teaching is good. There are examples of outstanding teaching in all key stages, but the overall quality is not yet high enough to ensure that all pupils make the optimum progress. Inconsistencies in the usefulness of teachers' planning and their marking of pupils' work are key to the variations in quality.
- Pupils are proud to belong to their school. They describe it as, 'Fantastic and amazing because everyone is kind to each other and the teachers help us to learn a lot.' Typically, behaviour is outstanding as is pupils' understanding of how to keep safe.
- The dynamism and focus of the headteacher are reflected by leaders at all levels, including the governing body, and by staff throughout the school. Rigorous yet supportive management of performance is improving the quality of teaching. Staff welcome the recently introduced high levels of individual responsibility and accountability. The outstanding curriculum offers pupils much enjoyment as well as a wealth of opportunities to develop both personally and academically.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing to equal that in reading and mathematics by having higher expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 of:
  - the amount and quality of pupils' extended writing
  - the presentation and use of correct grammar in pupils' work.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is of outstanding quality by ensuring that:
  - planning clearly identifies what it is that those of different ability are expected to learn
  - all marking is consistently of the high quality of the best
  - the effectiveness of the different strategies adopted in lessons is evaluated.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children usually join the Reception year with skills that are broadly as expected for their age. In the lively Reception environment with activities that are largely based on their own enthusiasms, such as for buried treasure or castles, children settle well and make at least good progress so that they usually join Year 1 with above average skills in all areas. Children collaborate well, using their confident oral skills to negotiate amicable play, and they show high levels of concentration. In a session to promote the understanding of the links between letters and sounds, children of lower ability sustained their focus very well, inspired by first reading a word such as 'man' or 'ship' and then rushing with glee to fish for the relevant object in the water tray before returning for another go.

Older pupils also demonstrate much enthusiasm for learning, reporting with pleasure that lessons are fun. They settle well, are prepared to ask if they do not understand something and cooperate well when working in small groups. They show resilience when, for example, tackling challenging mathematical problems. However, older pupils in particular do not always take enough pride in the quantity, relevance, presentation and grammar of their written work. Consequently, this does not fully reflect the confidence and fluency of their reading and their spoken language. In the past, attainment in English and mathematics has been well above average at the end of both key stages, but in 2011 it fell to broadly average. In the current year, the pace of pupils' progress has increased well and the attainment of most pupils in both key stages is above average. This includes the attainment in reading of pupils in Year 6 and Year 2, with younger pupils showing confident word blending skills. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress from their starting points due to the school's careful analysis of, and well tailored provision to meet, their individual needs. Almost all parents and carers say that their children make good progress at the school.

## Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers consider that their children are well taught. Some correctly identify that, whilst it is improving, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Typically, lessons move at a swift pace with engaging activities that capture pupils' interest. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources and different strategies to motivate pupils and help them relate their learning to real life. For example, in the Reception class, children eagerly deciphered words from packaging containing food as they extended their reading and writing skills while deciding what Cinderella's ugly sisters might like to eat. In Key Stage 1 pupils' walk outside and collection of real materials, plus the use of photographs to help their recall and adults' in-depth questioning, extended their thinking and inspired them to write poetry of high quality. Such teaching also promotes very successfully pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The strong relationships which are evident in every classroom create a very positive learning environment in which pupils have the confidence to voice their thinking.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use subject specific language well to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Most teachers check pupils' learning very effectively throughout lessons and help them to recognise misapprehensions in a supportive manner. This was very evident in a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2 where the teacher swiftly analysed one pupil's difficulties and skilfully balanced guidance with allowing the pupil time to think through where he had gone wrong. Such methods result in pupils whose self-esteem and capacity to tackle similar problems successfully are greatly increased. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that they are fully included in lessons and receive high quality support from classroom assistants and the teacher according to their needs. Some teachers carefully plan what pupils of different ability are expected to learn and make these expectations clear to pupils, but this is not always the case. This means that, on occasion, lessons which are often successful in terms of pupils' enthusiasm and effort do not always provide the right levels of challenge to move pupils' learning forward at an even better pace. Similarly, some marking provides excellent guidance to pupils on what they have done well and the next steps they should take to improve their work. Elsewhere, the marking consists of a tick or bland positive comment, with little rigour or pointers for improvement.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

The excellent behaviour of the overwhelming majority of pupils makes a very strong contribution to the quality of learning and the calm, purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils of all ages coped extremely well with the torrential rain which prevented outdoor play on the two inspection days. So, too, did pupils in Year 1 who learned a great deal during their 'forest school' activities about the importance of wearing correct clothing and exercising muscles in order to keep warm and safe! Almost all parents and carers consider that their children behave extremely well and feel safe in school and all the pupils spoken with confirmed this. They cogently explained about different types of bullying, including persistent name-calling or isolation, and said with confidence that, 'at this school we don't do bullying'. Pupils understand about physical hazards and those posed by electronic communications, carry out risk assessments, and act in a safe, sensible manner. Most pupils consider

that behaviour has improved over recent months and they agree that those pupils who find self-discipline hard to achieve are helped to recognise their flash-points and take appropriate action. Pupils are unfailingly polite. They show respect for others and appreciation of their different talents. Older pupils carry out their buddy duties with the youngest children, including those in the on-site nursery, with pleasure and maturity, leading to a friendly, supportive and happy environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are consistently above average.

## **Leadership and management**

All documentation related to leadership and management are headed by the strap-line, 'Does every decision we make benefit the children?' Constant reflection and highly successful implementation of this mantra lie at the heart of the school's rapid improvement over the past eighteen months. During this time the rigour with which class teachers, subject, and senior leaders assess and track pupils' progress has significantly strengthened. The information that is now available underpins all decision making and has led to a wide range of different actions leading to pupils' improved achievement. Accurate identification of weaknesses in teaching combined with good access to professional development, including highly focused peer-mentoring, are continuing to bring about good improvements in this area. While the impact of some of the recent actions has been evaluated, the school has not yet assessed the relative effectiveness of the very many different classroom strategies adopted by teachers. A very clear vision for the school plus a strong sense of teamwork and professional honesty are shared by all staff. The complementary skills of the headteacher and deputy headteachers are driving the school forward at a rapid pace. The success of the steps already taken demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.

The governing body now has access to very useful information about pupils' progress and this, together with purposeful links to those responsible for different aspects of the provision, enables its members to hold the school closely to account. A high priority is placed on effective safeguarding, and arrangements meet requirements. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination successfully. Outstanding leadership of the provision to support pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs ensures that such pupils make equally good progress as that of their peers. The provision is enhanced by strong support from the governing body, excellent liaison with outside agencies and very close partnership with parents and carers.

The vibrant curriculum promotes pupils' basic skills very successfully with subjects purposefully linked to ensure pupils' learning is relevant. It includes residential visits for pupils from Year 1 upwards, forest school activities and the teaching of French throughout the school, a wealth of extra-curricular clubs and activities and special events such as the highly successful community exhibition. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly successfully, nurtures in them an enthusiasm for learning and prepares them very well for the next stage in their education.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Tarvin Primary School, Chester, CH3 8LS**

Thank you very much for your warm welcome to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Particular thanks go to those of you who gave up some of your time to speak with us and to those who read to us. It was a pleasure to hear you talk with such pride about your school. We were also impressed by how keen you were to let us know how much you appreciate the kindness and help offered to you by the staff. Your behaviour and sensible awareness of how to keep yourselves safe are outstanding – well done! This makes the school a happy place in which to learn.

Tarvin is a good school which is rapidly improving because the senior leaders are very skilled at analysing what works well and deciding on the right actions to take. Children have a good start in the Reception class and you all make at least good progress throughout the school. This is because the teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding. We know that your senior teachers have made many improvements over recent months and we have asked them to make sure now that all the teaching is as good as the best. In particular we have asked that all teachers adapt the different tasks to provide you with just the right challenge, and give you helpful hints for improvement when they mark your work. We think that this will help you to make even better progress.

Your attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average, but you make less rapid progress in writing than in other areas. We have, therefore, also asked the school's leaders to make sure that teachers have high enough expectations of how much you write by the end of Key Stage 2, and how well you present your work and use correct grammar. We know that you enjoy working hard and we have seen you tussling with mathematical problems, so we are sure that you will also be able to help with the improvements by trying even harder with your written work. This letter comes with our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Drake  
Lead inspector

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