

Dean Valley Community Primary School

Albert Road, Bollington, Cheshire, SK10 5HS

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection because of strong leadership at all levels.
- Pupils enjoy school. All parents who completed the questionnaire agree pupils are happy and they would recommend this school to others.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average across the school and by the end of Year 6.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- All pupils achieve well and there are no marked differences between groups.
- Teaching is consistently good in all classes because teachers know their pupils well and match activities to their needs.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. This means pupils read widely and often.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good at work and play. They have a good awareness of most forms of bullying.
- The headteacher and members of the governing body have been resolute in their determination to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Teachers' performance is well managed and the systems to check on the work of the school are rigorous and effective.
- Improvements to the school's systems for keeping pupils safe mean all safeguarding requirements are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of mathematics has improved but is not as strong as the teaching of reading and writing.
- The more-able pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge.
- Pupils' awareness of homophobic bullying is under-developed.
- The school does not always check if pupils are on track to make better than expected progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons taught by eight teachers. Three of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also made several shorter visits to classrooms to observe the teaching of reading and small group catch-up sessions.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play and lunchtime. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books.
- They took into account the 69 responses from parents shown on Parent View (the online questionnaire). They also spoke to parents informally at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson, Lead Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than found nationally and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The number of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school exceeds the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There is a before and after school club and a nursery on the school site. These are not managed by the governing body and are subject to a separate inspection. The latest report is available on the Ofsted website.
- When the school was inspected in July 2011, its overall effectiveness was judged inadequate and it was given a notice to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by improving the teaching of mathematics, particularly for the most able by:
 - providing the more-able pupils with greater opportunities to solve complex mathematical problems
 - enabling pupils to use and practise their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum
 - ensuring pupils move quickly in their mathematics learning by not spending too long on skills they have already grasped
 - checking pupils are on track to make accelerated progress.
- Develop pupils awareness of homophobic bullying so it matches their good understanding of other types of bullying by:
 - providing training for staff on homophobic bullying
 - reviewing the curriculum to ensure pupils are taught about homophobic bullying.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make good progress from this point and reach above average standards when they leave Year 6. This means they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children in Reception get off to a tremendous start. Well planned and imaginative activities foster children's curiosity and independence. They are eager learners who concentrate well whether they work with an adult or on their own. They are well equipped to tackle Year 1 work.
- All pupils achieve well because inconsistencies in their progress have been eradicated. Gaps between different groups of pupils have been narrowed. For example, girls now achieve as well as boys in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as all pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because of the effective support they receive in class and in small group sessions. The more-able pupils make good progress from their higher starting points. Nonetheless, some of the more-able pupils do not always make rapid progress because their tasks lack challenge.
- Additional funding received by the school for some pupils has been used effectively to raise their achievement. Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make better progress than all pupils in school in reading and writing so their attainment is above average. However, this rate of progress is not as strong in mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in all areas of the curriculum, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils have a good grasp of the sounds letters make and they are competent and confident readers. Good achievement in writing is due to lots of opportunities to write across a range of subjects. Their attainment in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is improving strongly and is above average. Their obvious enjoyment in practical activities was evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson as they used the properties of shapes to draw a 'secret' picture. Pupils' progress is sometimes limited because they spend too long practising skills they have already grasped.
- Pupils say they enjoy their learning because it is fun and they are expected to work hard. Pupils are bright, articulate and enthusiastic learners who are keen to succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is consistently good. Teachers use a wide range of lively and imaginative activities that capture pupils' interests and enable them to make good progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well so their lesson planning matches pupils' different abilities. However, teachers do not always ensure that the more-able pupils achieve their very best.
- Classrooms are bright and pupils' learning is supported through helpful displays and practical resources. Teachers are good role models and encourage pupils to show respect and consideration for each other in their learning. Consequently, pupils feel confident to 'have a go' without any fear of getting it wrong.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge, particularly in English, to provide clear explanations and ask the right questions to check pupils' understanding. This means that pupils are able to begin independent tasks swiftly and with confidence.
- Some teaching is exceptional. In these lessons, teachers have very high expectations of all pupils so that activities are precisely matched to different needs. Time is used very well and pupils have no doubts about what is expected from them.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to solve more complex problems or use their mathematical

skills in other subjects.

- Teaching assistants have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Effective strategies are in place to help pupils to catch-up on gaps in their learning. For example, pupils with gaps in their spelling knowledge have extra sessions to remedy this weakness.
- Teachers mark work thoroughly and provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve, which pupils respond to positively.
- Teachers promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. They promote positive relationships and encourage an excitement in learning. The link with a school in Kenya is fully exploited to develop pupils' understanding of different cultures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. As a result classroom environments are calm and learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils' behaviour is equally good around school. This was evident as they waited quietly to buy snacks on the playground and the calm manner in which they entered and exited assembly.
- Pupils know how the school expects them to behave because they help to write the school rules. A clear behaviour policy is consistently used by all staff so that behaviour is well managed. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that pupils in the school are well behaved. School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good from day-to-day and is improving over time.
- Different groups of pupils say they feel safe in school and free from any harassment. Almost all the parents who responded to Parent View agree that their child is safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, younger pupils know about 'stranger danger'. Older pupils talk with confidence about the strategies they use to keep themselves safe when using personal computers at home.
- Pupils say bullying hardly ever happens at school and they know what to do if they are bullied. A few parents who responded to Parent View disagreed that the school deals effectively with bullying. School records show that any reported incidents of bullying are dealt with well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of most types of bullying. For example, older pupils know the harm that can be caused by leaving someone out or talking about them. Pupils have a very good understanding of why racist name-calling is wrong. Their understanding of homophobic bullying is less secure.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent punctuality and above average attendance rates.

The leadership and management are good

- Improvements since the previous inspection have been swift and effective. This is because leaders and managers at all levels have been relentless in their drive to improve teaching and raise achievement. The headteacher actively promotes high expectations. She has managed the pace of change very effectively so that there is a common sense of purpose and staff morale is high.
- Teachers' performance is well managed. All teachers have challenging targets to help them raise pupils' achievement. Leaders and managers observe teaching frequently. They provide helpful feedback and match training and support to whole-school and individual needs.
- Rigorous checks are made to find out how well pupils achieve. The school is alert to any pupil at risk of not making expected progress. However, they do not routinely check if all pupils are on track to make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and managers know the school well. Clear plans are in place to make it even better. The school's marked improvement in a short amount of time demonstrates good capacity to improve.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. This is because

there are no inequalities in pupils' achievement and very few incidents of harassment.

- Partnerships with parents are fostered through regular communication and opportunities for parents to share their views. However, a few parents did not feel the school responded to their concerns.
 - The curriculum is good because it meets the needs of most pupils and is effectively promoting pupils' enjoyment of learning. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors. For example, the topic on the Second World War was brought alive for Year 4 pupils as they visited Tatton Park as wartime evacuees.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through assemblies, opportunities to work with each other, links with the local community and with schools overseas. Opportunities such as these develop pupils as creative and positive thinkers who can mix well and value differences between each other.
 - The local authority has supported the school well. They have rightly reduced the amount of support as school leaders and managers have become increasingly confident and competent in driving improvement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body make a very positive contribution to the school's success. They rigorously monitor the work of the school and have up-to-date knowledge of pupils' achievement and teaching. They are very supportive of the school but also provide robust challenge to senior leaders and managers
 - The governing body ensures financial resources are well managed, including the school's use of additional government funding to support some pupils, those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, for example.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111147
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	386130

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maggie Swindells
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Thorpe
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2011
Telephone number	01625 572767
Fax number	01625 574522
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