

Vine Tree Primary School

Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 8AD

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- By the end of Year 6, achievement in mathematics is outstanding.
- Topics covered in lessons and visitors from different cultures now ensure that the cultural development of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they care well for each other. They feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- Teaching is usually good. Sometimes it is outstanding.
- The headteacher is improving the school well and has a clear and accurate view of what needs to improve.
- Partnerships with other schools are used very well to raise the achievement of pupils and to improve resources for them.
- Governors provide good challenge and support for the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is of outstanding quality. In particular, marking does not provide clear enough guidance for pupils on how to improve. Pupils do not have enough time in lessons to complete, review and improve their work.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as high as in mathematics or reading. The progress pupils make in their writing is not checked frequently enough to ensure they are always on track to make good progress
- Teachers do not consistently plan to challenge and support groups of pupils with different abilities, especially in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. They also made a number of short visits to other activities conducted by other adults.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils. Inspectors also held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vanessa MacDonald

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and an above average proportion is girls.
- A low proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of forces families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a number of awards including International Schools Award and Active Schools Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities that consistently promote high levels of achievement for all ability groups
 - ensuring that leaders and managers frequently check the progress of pupils in writing across the school.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all marking is of a high quality
 - reducing the amount of time that teachers talk in lessons, so that pupils have more time to complete and check their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Reception class with skills below those that are typically expected for their age. They develop number and language skills well, due to the range of activities that are planned by staff. For example, they enjoy counting bricks when building a house and working out how many more bricks they need to make the different walls the same height. As a result, they mostly finish the Reception Year with skills in line with where they should be.
- Progress through Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, although here girls do not make as much progress as boys in writing. By the time pupils finish Year 2, they reach average standards in reading and mathematics, but their attainment in writing is just below average.
- Progress is at least good overall across Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in reading. In writing, they reach average standards overall but boys' attainment is below that of girls.
- Progress in mathematics is outstanding by the end of Year 6. This is due to the many well-planned and imaginative opportunities that challenge pupils' problem-solving skills. The highly effective support of a local high school also helps to support the high quality teaching of mathematics. This leads to pupils reaching well above average standards in mathematics.
- The school ensures that pupils supported by the pupil premium and those with special educational needs achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils. This is due to individual support and teaching groups which meet their needs well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good with some that is outstanding. When it is at its best, excellent use is made of a wide range of activities to involve and excite pupils. Teachers also regularly check on how well pupils are learning. This enables teachers to support individual pupils well if they are struggling or need more challenge. Excellent use is also made of clear lesson aims to review learning with the pupils.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils are organised in ability sets for mathematics to help teachers to plan in a more targeted way for the needs of pupils. The quality of teaching in these sets is consistently high. In lessons, pupils regularly have opportunities to discuss and show their methods of solving problems in front of the class and in groups.
- For example, in one lesson about time problems, pupils had to work out what times they would need for queuing, eating and travelling for a day out to a theme park. Pupils were given greater challenge depending on their abilities, such as having to work out the amount of rides they could go on in a certain number of hours. Some groups were also given additional problems, such as having to work out how much money they would need for their chosen food items for the day.
- Other adults in the classroom support pupils well. This is because they have a thorough understanding of pupils' needs and how to support them. In the best lessons, teachers' plans specify which pupils are to be supported by them and how.
- In literacy lessons, pupils in mixed-ability classes have good opportunities for writing. For example, pupils enjoyed writing about story characters or correcting text with appropriate punctuation.
- In the small number of lessons observed where the teaching was not so effective, pupils were not able to finish work or to think about what they had learned. This is because teachers spent too much time talking to the class. Marking also sometimes fails to explain what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve further.
- In some cases, especially in lessons where pupils have to write at length, activities are not specific to the needs of different abilities. As a result, standards in writing are not always as good as they could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in class. They are always keen to learn and generally concentrate well in lessons.
- The 'Good to be green' behaviour policy is well understood and helps to promote positive behaviour through rewards given to pupils. For example, pupils enjoy the Golden Time which extends their play time at the end of the week if they behave and work well.
- Attendance is average and improving strongly. This is because pupils enjoy school, and the work of the learning mentor helps to ensure they attend.
- There have been no exclusions since the last inspection and pupils say that bullying of all types is infrequent and dealt with quickly.
- Pupils care well for each other. For example, older pupils help younger pupils to play games at break times, as well as supporting them with their reading. Good relationships and the way teachers organise their classrooms helps pupils to learn well.
- Pupils who need help to improve their behaviour and with handling their emotions are given support by adults. This helps them to feel safe and cared for well.
- Most older pupils have a very good understanding of internet safety and the effects of drugs and alcohol. This is because the school organises lessons and uses outside speakers to help pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Parents agree that the school is caring and that their children are looked after well.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively and is well supported by a skilful deputy headteacher. Together, they have led the school from being satisfactory to, now, good. This is due to their accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve.
- The headteacher ensures that partnerships with other organisations, such as the local high schools, help to improve pupils' achievement. This is particularly evident in pupils' high achievement in mathematics but also in terms of computer resources for pupils.
- Due to pupils' improved achievement, the local authority no longer checks the school as regularly as in the past. However, over time it has been effective in helping the school to improve the way that children's progress is checked and recorded in the Reception class.
- The management of the school has been strengthened through the improved management of most subjects. However, the leadership of teaching writing is not yet effective enough, especially in checking the achievement of pupils across the school.
- The headteacher has a clear understanding of what makes good teaching. He uses his knowledge well to ensure that teachers are meeting the expected standards. Very effective use is made of outside specialists to check the school's views about the quality of its teaching and also to train staff in improving aspects of their teaching. Targets are set for teachers and are linked well to high expectations of pupils' progress and to teachers' salaries.
- The curriculum is interesting and enriched by a good range of clubs, visits and visitors. Pupils' cultural development is now promoted well through topic work, links with Ethiopia, themed weeks and the specialist teaching of French. The overwhelming majority of parents are satisfied with the school's provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving and about the quality of teaching. They ensure that safeguarding duties are met. Relevant training and use of outside support is used well to ensure that they monitor the work of the headteacher effectively. They ensure that the school's funds, including the pupil premium funding are used well to support all pupils.

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	111143
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	401174

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Warham
Headteacher	Darren Locke
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2010
Telephone number	01270 661526
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