

INSPECTION REPORT

Weaver Primary School

Nantwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111167

Headteacher: Mr. T. Newbould

Reporting inspector: Dr. B. Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 16-17 October 2000

Inspection number: 224878

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Boys and girls

School address: Western Avenue

Nantwich

Cheshire

Postcode:

CW5 7AJ

Telephone number: 01270 626335

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. A. Raisbeck

Date of previous inspection: 27 November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Weaver Primary School is a community school for boys and girls aged four to eleven. The number of pupils on roll is 254. The school is larger than most primary schools and has expanded considerably since the time of the last inspection. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs make up a smaller proportion than in most schools; the percentage of pupils with statements of special needs is low. The attainment of pupils on entry is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Over the years from 1996 to 1999 taken together, pupils have left Weaver Primary nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English and mathematics and nearly two terms ahead in science. The overall quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management by the newly appointed headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the governing body are very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- In national tests for eleven year olds, standards have been consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science; in the work seen during the inspection standards were above average in these subjects,.
- The overall quality of teaching is good; teaching of those pupils in mixed age classes is appropriate for each age group.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and governing body are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; pupils' personal development is very good as are relationships
- The school's provision for pupils under five is good.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology, whilst improving, is still below national expectations.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The school was last inspected in November 1995. Since the last inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science have been well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. English and mathematics, however, have been consistently better than science. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were below those in mathematics. That is no longer the case. Standards in pupils' writing and spelling have improved satisfactorily. The key issue to sustain the supportive relationships and positive attitudes underpinning much of the pupils' work has been appropriately addressed. The issue to develop pupils' basic skills has been well met. An issue to agree and implement a common approach to marking and assessment of pupils' work has been satisfactorily dealt with. Appropriate schemes of work have been developed. Classroom practice is now monitored and evaluated appropriately. Greater opportunities have been provided for pupils' personal research and independent learning; library provision has improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | A | A | A | B |
| mathematics | A | A | A | B |
| science | A | B | B | C |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

Over the years from 1996 to 2000 averaged together, pupils aged eleven have left Weaver Primary nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English and mathematics and nearly two terms ahead in science. The school's results are rising at a rate that is broadly in line with the national rate of improvement. The school's targets are suitably ambitious and are on course to be met. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards for the current seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in speaking and listening and average in writing, reading, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Whilst standards overall are high, they could be higher in science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They are confident and articulate. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour in and out of the classrooms is good. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils' personal development is very good and relationships are very good. Pupils show appropriate respect for the feelings of others. |
| Attendance | Pupils' attendance is good. Levels of unauthorised absence are in line with national levels. |

In and around school, pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well in assemblies and when having lunch.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Good | Good |

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. All of the teaching seen in each of the classes was at least satisfactory. Twenty three per cent of lessons seen were satisfactory, 51 per cent were good and 26 per cent were very good. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well.

Particular strengths in teaching include the way in which teachers share the learning objectives for lessons with the children so that pupils realise why they are in that lesson. Class management is good throughout the school. The school meets the needs of all its pupils well, including those who have special educational needs. The way in which assessment is used is particularly good for children under five. Strengths in pupils' learning include their interest, concentration and ability to work independently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities include netball, football, science club and art club. Additionally there are two recorder groups for Key Stage 2 pupils. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Provision for pupils' special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual educational plans are sharply focused. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, for their moral development it is good. The school's provision for social development is very good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school's care for its pupils is satisfactory. Assessment in science is not as well developed as it is in English and mathematics. |

The school works very well in partnership with parents. Parents are generally very happy with the school. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements;

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Leadership and management by the headteacher, senior management team and other key staff are very good. The senior management team works well together. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities is very good. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. |
| The strategic use of resources | The strategic use of resources is good. |

The new headteacher has made a very good start in monitoring standards. The deputy headteacher has worked hard on the school's finances. The teacher in charge of the foundation stage tracks her children well as they move out of the reception classes and through Key Stage 1. The extent to which the school applies the principles of best value is very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Teaching is good. • The school has high expectations. • There are good links with parents. • Their children are making good progress. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities. • Some are not happy with the continued expansion of pupil numbers. • Some parents have expressed concerns about teaching in mixed age classes. |

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors judge that the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Currently, the number of pupils on the school's roll is not adversely affecting standards. Teaching in the mixed age classes is appropriate for each age group.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

In national tests for eleven year olds, standards have been consistently above average in English, mathematics and science; in the work seen during the inspection standards were above average in these subjects.

1. When children enter the reception class, their levels of attainment are broadly average. By the time pupils are seven, at the end of Key Stage 1, their test results over the last five years averaged together have been approximately two terms ahead of national averages in reading and mathematics and nearly one and a half terms ahead in writing. Over the last five years pupils have left Weaver Primary School aged eleven nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English and mathematics and nearly two terms ahead in science.
2. Inspection findings are that standards in English, mathematics and science are above national averages by the end of Key Stage 2. This conflicts with the school's results over the last five years where standards have been well above average. The school appropriately recognises the needs of pupils in Year 6 and has just split them into two groups for literacy, numeracy and some science. This should have the effect of raising these pupils' attainment further. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is judged to be above national standards in speaking and listening and in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Again, this cohort of pupils, split appropriately into two groups, has several months to go before it is assessed against national standards. Contrary to the worries of some parents, inspectors did not find evidence that the attainment of those Year 2 pupils in the mixed Year 1 / 2 class was being adversely affected by their being in a mixed age class. Their current standards were judged to be at least in line with those in the single age Year 2 class.
3. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to compare and evaluate a novel or a play such as 'Macbeth', talk and write coherently about the plot and characters and able to understand sophisticated punctuation. Eleven year olds are adept at "mental maths". For example, in a session in which each member of the class had mathematics cards practising the nine times table one pupil would read from a card "what is $(9 \times 7) + 6$ ". The pupil in the class who had the correct answer of 69 would then immediately say "sixty nine" and then go on to ask their question. This rapid questioning was enjoyed by the pupils and re-inforced their learning well. Many of these Year 6 pupils understand that when handling data on bar charts, bars may be labelled with the range but not the division between the bars. In a science lesson on dissolving substances, one group of lower attaining pupils worked inappropriately without access to necessary equipment and without a sufficient degree of accuracy. There is a lack of a sufficiently systematic build up of knowledge and understanding of key scientific vocabulary throughout the school, although there are shining examples of good practice. Additionally, a lack of consistent rigour in drawing scientific diagrams from an early age is restricting pupils' attainment in science.
4. Pupils aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1 read simple instructions, recipes and plans and use their awareness of grammar to decipher new or unfamiliar words. They use their literacy skills across the curriculum appropriately, for example in history when finding out about seaside holidays in the past. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are higher than those in reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils recognise a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils can rapidly carry out simple "sums" in their heads such as "What number is 11 more than 46?" Throughout the

school, pupils' instant recall of their multiplication tables is quite good but there was not a lot of evidence of whole class practising even further to improve this vital knowledge.

5. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. The coordinator for this subject has put in a huge amount of effort and this should start to bear fruit. Pupils' work in the areas of monitoring and modelling is in its infancy.
6. Attainment in other subjects is at least in line with national expectations.

The overall quality of teaching is good; teaching in the mixed age classes is appropriate for each age group.

7. All the teaching seen during the inspection in every class of the school was at least satisfactory. Approximately one in every four lessons was satisfactory, a further one in four was very good and in all the other lessons teaching was good.
8. Teachers are adept at sharing the learning objectives with pupils so that the children realise what the precise purpose of the lesson is. The teaching of those pupils with special educational needs is good. At times, some lessons lack "spark". Teachers are inhibited sometimes from having a particularly lively lesson because of the open plan nature of much of the school.
9. In a very good Year 1 / 2 literacy lesson, the lesson plan linked well to the longer-term plan for the class. The class teacher was confident and set a brisk pace. Pupils responded well to this approach and enjoyed writing careful instructions on "How to make a puppet". This re-inforced pupils' literacy skills well.
10. A particularly good Year 3 science lesson on the subject of animal diets started with the teacher giving pupils very clear learning objectives. The teacher's patient manner and high expectations drew out pupils' previous knowledge of the different types of teeth that animals have. As a result of a good lesson on the story of "The Three Pigs", in which the teacher had the full attention of the children, the reception class understand the importance of strength in materials.
11. Teaching in the mixed age classes was appropriate to the needs of each age group and was consistent with that in the single age classes. Some parents had raised concerns as to whether there were discrepancies. Standards of teaching, for example, in Year 1 / 2 and Year 2 were at a similar high level. The teaching seen in Year 4/ 5 was of a similar standard to that in Year 5. Teachers plan well between themselves so that over a period of time, the work covered is the same and pupils are not disadvantaged.

Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and governing body are very good.

12. The leadership and management by the newly appointed headteacher, the deputy headteacher who has been acting headteacher for over a year, the senior management team as a whole and the newly constituted governing body are very good.
13. The school has very clear educational direction and all staff are committed to further school improvement. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities well and has handled the continued expansion of the school over the last twelve months sensitively. Whilst the accommodation has improved since the time of the last inspection by the addition of two well furnished mobile classrooms, the accommodation is judged to be only satisfactory overall for the considerably larger pupil numbers. This is a matter about which the governing body and some parents are concerned.
14. Formal monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, whilst in its early stages, is taking place effectively. Additionally, curriculum coordinators effectively monitor planning and marking in the areas for which they are responsible. The school has a well thought out school development plan that clearly identifies the next stages in the school's development.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; pupils' personal development is very good as are relationships.

15. In all the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory and generally good or very good. This was also the case between lessons and on the playground. Discussions with pupils show that they enjoy school and particularly like the family atmosphere of which the school is rightly proud.
16. Opportunities for pupils' personal development and relationships both between pupils and with adults are very good. Older pupils have opportunities to help younger Reception children, for example, by helping them with their meals or packed lunches. Pupils act appropriately as road safety monitors and speak to the whole school in assemblies. The school has an appropriate house system in which pupils collect up house points from each class on a weekly basis and enter totals on the house points' board. Whilst there is currently no school council, there are plans to form one.
17. During a quiet shared reading session for pupils in Year 3 / 4, pupils showed great sensitivity when entering comments about their "partner reader" on the reading record sheet. When asked what they would write if their partner read poorly, they responded with "good try" or similar. They explained that they would not put a derogatory comment as that may upset the other pupil. Pupils are sensitive to others.

The school's provision for pupils under five is good.

18. There are currently two parallel Reception classes and the children benefit from the school's provision for their outdoor play. The coordinator for the under fives is also coordinator for Key Stage 1. She is a member of the school's senior management team and has built up good provision for the under fives. When these children leave the early years section of school, she continues to track their progress appropriately through Key Stage 1. By the time that they are five, nearly all children reach the early learning goals in all curriculum areas.
19. Teaching is good and the curriculum matches the early learning goals. This section of the school has good and important links with parents and staff visit the variety of feeder nurseries. Children are encouraged to share their portfolio of work with parents and reading diaries show a good home-school dialogue. The school organises a picnic in the summer for parents along with "help your child at home " evenings covering topics such as reading and fine motor skills. Teachers for children under five plan well together and have good professional relationships with class assistants.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology, whilst improving, is still below national expectations.

20. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology whilst improving is still below national expectations at the end of both key stages. The coordinator for the subject is very competent and hard working and has produced a comprehensive policy document together with helpful portfolios of written work.
21. All classes now teach the subject on a regular basis and make use of two laptop computers that are made available in their teaching areas on a rota basis. Not all classes yet have a P.C. and there is no information and communication technology suite due to constraints on the accommodation. Pupils are currently not given sufficient opportunities to use simulations and explore models or to monitor events and respond to them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22. In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:
 - Raise pupils' attainment in information and communication technology by ensuring that pupils have greater opportunities to use simulations, explore models, monitor events and respond to them, as specified in the National Curriculum. (Paragraphs 20, 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 21 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 12 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 26 | 51 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/A | 254 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 7 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 21 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 4 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 35 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 3 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 4.0 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.3 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.4 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 0.5 |
|---------------------------|-----|

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 13 | 15 | 28 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 12 | 12 | 13 |
| | Girls | 15 | 14 | 15 |
| | Total | 27 | 26 | 28 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 96(73) | 93(69) | 100(100) |
| | National | 83(82) | 84(83) | 90(87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 12 | 13 | 13 |
| | Girls | 14 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 26 | 28 | 28 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 93(69) | 100(100) | 100(100) |
| | National | 84(82) | 88(86) | 88(87) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 18 | 15 | 33 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| | Girls | 13 | 12 | 13 |
| | Total | 30 | 29 | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 91(84) | 88(86) | 91(81) |
| | National | 75(70) | 72(69) | 85(78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 17 | 18 | 17 |
| | Girls | 13 | 12 | 13 |
| | Total | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 91(86) | 91(92) | 91(89) |
| | National | 70(68) | 72(69) | 79(75) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 3 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 235 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 2 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 11.4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23.1 |
| Average class size | 25.4 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 2.0 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 42.6 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 336625 |
| Total expenditure | 339980 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1810 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -3355 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 6616 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 235 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 78 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 62 | 37 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 42 | 54 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 42 | 51 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 44 | 37 | 14 | 3 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 58 | 40 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 37 | 49 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 68 | 27 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 65 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 45 | 50 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| The school is well managed and led. | 46 | 42 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 47 | 46 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 24 | 35 | 18 | 10 | 13 |

Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents are concerned about the continuing expansion in pupil numbers.