



Ravenbank Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111006
LEA Warrington
Inspection number 278566
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Markham CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pepper Street
School category	Community		Lymm
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheshire WA13 0JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 753926
Number on roll	310	Fax number	01925 757473
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J Halloran
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Avril Topping

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Ravenbank Primary School is situated in a residential area in Lymm, Cheshire. There are 310 children on roll aged from 4 to 11 years. The vast majority of children are of white British background with only a very small number from minority ethnic groups. Five children are at an early stage of learning English. The number entitled to free school meals is low. When they start in the Reception class the majority of children have average level skills. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school is recognised as an Investor in People.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school rightly judges its effectiveness as outstanding. It has a warm and welcoming ethos and presents a rich and wide range of learning opportunities to pupils. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she is well supported by staff and governors. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a determined commitment to improvement. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and this strong commitment to continuous improvement at all levels within the school leaves it very well placed to make further progress. The school provides outstanding value for money.

Children make a very good start to their learning in the Reception classes and attain standards above those expected by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout the school children enjoy their education and achieve exceptionally and consistently high standards because they are well taught. Close attention is given to ensuring that they make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science and, as a result, the standards achieved by children in national tests have been maintained at an exceptionally and consistently high level over the last five years. However, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing is not as high as in the other subjects. Careful attention is also given to ensuring that children's skills are developed across the whole curriculum with particular emphasis being given to creativity. Children are very well supported by their parents and are eager to learn. Behaviour is exemplary and children's personal development is outstanding because they are very well cared for, and as a result feel secure and happy.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its many strengths and improve standards further, the school should:

- improve standards in writing by raising the level of challenge presented to pupils and ensuring that the marking of pupils' work consistently makes clear what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When they enter the school children have average skills overall. They make outstanding progress and reach exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 6. Children make a good start to their learning in the Reception class and reach standards above those expected by the end of the Reception year. By the end

of Year 2 standards are well above those expected nationally overall, although. In 2004 standards in writing were not as high as in reading and mathematics, although they were still above the national average. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to make very good progress. In the 2004 national tests results were exceptionally high overall and the 2005 test results show that this level of performance has been maintained.

However, the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 is lower in writing than the other subjects. The school has identified this issue and is working hard to raise pupils' performance.

Close attention is given to meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, as a result, they make outstanding progress. Similarly, those pupils who are gifted or talented are suitably challenged so that their achievement is outstanding. Virtually all pupils successfully achieve the challenging targets they are set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are extremely positive about their school. They thoroughly enjoy learning and taking part in activities outside of lessons. Most try hard during lessons and are proud to take responsibility for their own learning. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Pupils get on very well with each other and work and play together harmoniously. Both the school council and Years 5 and 6 councils give pupils valuable experiences of working together for the benefit of the community. For example, they have been influential in improving the playground facilities and enhancing their learning conditions through the playing of quiet music. Attendance is outstanding; it is consistently high.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. They gain a very good understanding of world religions and cultures through lessons, visits and focused weeks. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills is outstanding; this will aid them when they leave school. They develop self-esteem and confidence because their different achievements are valued and rewarded. For example, pupils are proud to receive awards in assembly, particularly those for the tidiest classroom from the site manager. Pupils are very strongly encouraged to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and they understand very well the importance of having a healthy diet.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. The emphasis being given to creativity makes learning interesting for pupils and they consequently make outstanding progress.

Teachers are sensitive to the needs of all their pupils, and draw out their best through a caring but demanding approach, although some writing tasks do not challenge the more able pupils enough. Relationships throughout the school are very good and teachers' excellent management of behaviour ensures that no time is wasted and pupils get the most out of their lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they explain things clearly and ensure that pupils know what they have to do. They create a sense of fun and enjoyment and lessons proceed at a lively pace. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, work hard, do their best and make outstanding progress. Teaching

assistants work very effectively with teachers and their sensitive approach ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well. Gifted and talented pupils are very well provided for, so that they can achieve their full potential.

Teachers use formal assessment information well to inform their planning and carefully check pupils' work during lessons. They make good use of positive comments when marking pupils' work, but the use of developmental comments to enable pupils to clearly understand how they can improve is less well used.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and matches the needs of pupils extremely well. It fully meets statutory requirements. Close attention is paid to literacy, numeracy and the development of skills in information and communication technology, but artistic aspects are also given significant attention. This results in a rich curriculum with a strong emphasis on creativity. For example, a local artist recently worked with pupils and inspired them to develop their own ideas when turning natural objects into art.

A broad range of extra curricular activities enriches the curriculum very well. Sporting activities are covered well, but attention to the arts is also strong with activities such as the school orchestra and choir. Such activities are a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to develop a safe and healthy life style with courses on safety, relationships and drug awareness. A regular programme of residential and other visits throughout the school give many opportunities for pupils to develop their social and personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The very high quality care, guidance and support provided to pupils has a very strong impact on pupils' learning and their achievement. Pupils trust the staff and know who to turn to if they need help or advice. They are supported very well when they are troubled or upset. There are good relationships with parents and carers, who feel welcome in school and are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. Pupils say they feel safe in school because the staff deal with any very rare instances of bullying swiftly and effectively. Good targeted help is provided for pupils who find learning hard. The arrangements for settling new children into the school and for pupils' transfer to secondary school are very good. Child protection systems and procedures are very effective and links with outside agencies are very good, ensuring that help is given to those pupils who require it. The school has a very strong caring ethos, which is evident in all aspects of its work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides a very strong and clear educational direction to the school. Her purposeful leadership presents a very good example for staff. She receives very valuable support from her deputy and other senior staff. The skills of subject coordinators have been developed since the last inspection and this has successfully created a very effective team approach with a very strong commitment to improvement. There is a clear sense of shared responsibility among all staff and governors to ensure that pupils do well.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are extremely well organised and effective. Pupils' performance is closely monitored and information is used very effectively to ensure that the needs of all pupils are identified and given attention in order that they fulfil their potential. The views of pupils and parents are sought in order to inform strategic planning and there is a strong focus on raising standards and improving the achievement of all pupils. Performance management is used well to support the development of all staff. Finances are managed very efficiently and the school is very well resourced. The school has Investor in People status and this is clearly reflected in the way that any identified training needs are given close attention.

The governing body meet its statutory responsibilities and very effectively supports and challenges the school. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and have a well informed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, three inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors. It was really interesting to listen to what you had to say. I am pleased to say that we decided that you have an outstanding school. The things that we particularly liked were:

- the way your headteacher runs the school. She listens to what you all think could make it better and works hard to make the changes happen
- the way all the staff take good care of you
- the way you work hard for your teachers and they do their best to help you learn
- your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school and the way you help each other
- the way you are trying to improve your writing.

We have asked your teachers to improve one thing to make your school even better. We want them to:

- help you to get even better at writing by making sure the work you are set is challenging and using comments when marking your work that help you understand how to improve.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We all hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Ravenbank becomes an even better school.