



Nether Alderley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111019
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278572
Inspection dates 13 February 2006 to 14 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Hughes CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Bradford Lane |
| School category | Community | | London Road |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 | | Nether Alderley, Macclesfield SK10 4TR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01625 583282 |
| Number on roll | 100 | Fax number | 01625 584687 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr M Gorton |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 November 1999 | Headteacher | Mr Ben Cox |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. It serves an area with favourable socio-economic circumstances with no children eligible for free school meals. Fewer than average children are from minority ethnic groups and all speak fluent English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The school gained the Basic Skills Mark and School Achievement Awards in 2003 and has achieved a Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with much of the school's written evaluation of its performance although grades for children's personal development and for the curriculum were modest and did not reflect this strong picture. A successful school with no major weaknesses when last inspected, it has maintained consistently high standards, despite recent long periods of illness of some staff. Children achieve well. Standards are significantly above average by the end of Year 6, although fewer children attain higher levels in English than in mathematics and science, particularly in Key Stage 1. The school recognises this and introduced strategies to improve writing this year. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to reach, and often exceed, the expected standards by Year 1. All staff show strong commitment to helping children achieve their best. This is an intimate school community where children are fulsome in their praise of teachers and the school environment. Many say how lucky they are to call this 'their school'. Children's attitudes, behaviour and overall personal development are exemplary; their unfettered enthusiasm is fuelled by an exceptionally rich curriculum. Even so, children do not have a strong enough understanding of the diversity of British society. Care, guidance and support for children are impressive. Parents say 'it is a wonderful environment for any child of any age'.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and demonstrates outstanding commitment to children's care and success. Subject leaders have a significant impact on children's learning. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain the drive to improve children's achievement in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Improve children's understanding of the diverse nature of modern British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well. Most arrive with skills just above expectations for children their age. They make good progress so that most exceed the goals set nationally for children by the time they enter Year 1. By Year 6, children's attainment is much higher than average. Achievement in English, mathematics and science continues to be good in all year groups for children who started at the school in their Reception year. Children who took the 2005 tests but joined the school later did not attain such high standards. Small year groups mean that one child achieving below the average has a marked effect on the school's performance. The strongest performance is in Key Stage 2. Relative weaknesses, such as the writing skills of higher attaining children in Key Stage 1, are addressed through increasingly rigorous analysis of children's performance and this accurately pinpoints areas to improve. Over the recent past, the school has attracted a larger proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this

too has an impact on test results, particularly at the higher levels. Irrespective of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, levels of attainment, ethnicity, gifts or talents, children achieve equally well. Children achieve very well in information and communication technology (ICT). There is a new computer suite and impressive delivery of this subject to all children by one member of staff. There is an unquenchable thirst to identify where the school can still improve which stems directly from the headteacher. High quality, attractive surroundings and resources, both inside and outdoors, coupled with an innovative curriculum, add to the successful outcomes for children.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their well-being, are outstanding. The school judges them to be good. Children's behaviour is excellent and attendance levels are above average. Children clearly relish school and wring every last drop of enjoyment from many exciting activities. They say 'everyone's really kind' and speak of 'exciting lessons' and 'great teachers' with clear affection. The youngest children concentrate ferociously, for example, as they try to overlap shiny scales on exotic fish collages. Children respond beautifully to the school's ethos of respect and are particularly proud of their school community and its stirring orchestra. They show exceptional generosity of spirit in their interactions around school. Year 6 'Fun Police' help younger children to make the most of playtimes while influential school councillors wrestle with how to spend their latest budget allocation. Children excel in collaborative tasks such as the organisation of Enterprise Week which combines teamwork with the skills needed to ensure their future economic well-being. These self-assured children flourish in the school's challenging and supportive environment. They have a clear understanding of safe practices and healthy lifestyles. They show excellent awareness of social and moral issues. Children have a very good knowledge of their local culture but need a broader understanding of the cultural diversity found in modern Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. Stimulating teaching engages children instantly. Children comment 'teachers make jokes - it's not just sitting at a table, propping up your head!' Teachers are so successful at engaging children's interest in activities because they relate much of children's learning to their personal experiences. For example, in a particularly effective session in the computer suite, Year 5 children transferred information they had collected about classmates onto laptops to create a database for further interrogation. Skilful teaching assistants make a significant contribution to successful outcomes in many lessons. There is first class support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or

with particular gifts and talents. As a result, they all make as much progress as other learners. The school seeks appropriate support from outside agencies so the most vulnerable children make equally good progress. Teachers increasingly use information and communication technology in lessons and children say this is great fun. Detailed assessment of children's work and the clearly identified targets that follow help children to reach challenging targets overall. Even so, recent test results in writing at Key Stage 1 were lower than expected and, this year, teachers are using strategies to improve children's attainment in this area of their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding although the school judges it good. It engages children from the moment they set foot in school. It is well matched to children's needs, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and meets statutory requirements. Evidence of exciting activities is everywhere; this encourages children to produce more of the same. The new ICT suite, coupled with skilled teaching, enables children to hone their computer skills across a range of subjects. New buildings offer children far more space and an attractive environment. The creative 'Thursday Clubs' afternoon programme broadens children's knowledge and understanding across the whole curriculum with the dedicated support of parents and community members. Everyone connected with the school speaks about 'Clubs' with immense pleasure. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits extend children's social and physical skills and knowledge of how to live healthy, safe lives. The delightful school orchestra adds to the creative buzz. Close partnership with other schools brings further, regular enrichment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is outstanding care, guidance and support for children. All adults show keen regard for children's well-being. Robust child protection procedures, along with rigorous health and safety procedures, ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment. Conscientious administrators, kitchen, lunchtime and caretaking personnel all complement this highest quality provision. Very effective links with other schools, particularly with regard to the transfer arrangements when children leave, and close liaison with outside agencies, ensure children are offered just the right levels of support.

Adults offer exacting levels of challenge to children in lessons and in their personal development and children improve consistently. Detailed assessment systems now help staff to track children's academic progress and to introduce new strategies when required. The school happily embraces more innovative approaches, such as 'mind friendly learning', in its quest to improve children's overall well-being and success. Children's happiness in school is of paramount concern to the headteacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management, with some outstanding elements, ensure this is a vibrant and successful school. The headteacher has remained undaunted by the series of long term staff sickness and absence problems of the last eighteen months. This staff turbulence is only just resolved with a new acting deputy headteacher. These disruptions to the leadership team last year were partly responsible for the dip in writing standards for higher attaining children in Key Stage 1. Subject leaders are full of enthusiasm as they constantly look to improve less successful aspects of school performance. This is currently evident in the new focus to improve children's writing. School leaders assure equality of opportunity for all learners regardless of their abilities. The school evaluates its own performance regularly and identifies the correct development priorities. The school seeks parental affirmation that it is providing what they want for their children. The leadership is not complacent as it listens to, and learns from, the experiences of its many partners. It is forging good links with overseas partners as well, although children's understanding of diversity in modern Britain is not strong enough. The governing body has a clear knowledge of the school's priorities and offers good support to the headteacher, staff and children. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are good custodians of the school's caring ethos, desire for high academic achievement and continued financial stability. They bring individual expertise to school and challenge practices if they do not see their value. Based on the improvements the school has made since the last inspection, and the strength of the new leadership team, there is good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | 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 | 2 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | 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? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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? | 2 | 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? | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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 | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | 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

Thank you for making me welcome during my recent visit. You were so friendly and entertained me with many stories of school life and the things you find special about your school.

There are many good things to be proud of in your school. Here are some I liked the most.

- Mr Cox, your headteacher, and all the adults look after you so well.
- You all make good progress because your teachers prepare challenging lessons for you and you all work very hard.
- You say how much you enjoy your lessons and 'Thursday Clubs'.
- You make spine-tingling music when you sing or when the orchestra plays.
- Everyone gets on really well in your school 'family' and you behave beautifully.
- You all cram so much into each day and no time is wasted.

This is what I have asked your school to do now so it will be even better.

- Continue to help you become even better at writing, especially the younger children.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about the many different groups of people who live in our multicultural country.

I hope you carry on working hard and enjoying school. Congratulations on helping to make your school so successful!