



Weaverham Forest Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111054
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278584
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Brian Padgett HMI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Forest Street |
| School category | Community | | Weaverham |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Northwich, Cheshire CW8 3EY |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01606 852171 |
| Number on roll | 194 | Fax number | 01606 854736 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs E Burdett |
| Date of previous inspection | 11 October 1999 | Headteacher | Mrs S How |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in Cheshire's largest village, to the west of Northwich. Most children live in the village, and they come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Their attainment on entry to the school varies, but overall it is below average. Nearly all children are of white British heritage and no children have English as an additional language. An average but increasing proportion of children has learning and behaviour difficulties.

An established before- and after-school club uses the school premises and a new pre-school setting opened in September 2005. These facilities are run by independent providers who work closely with the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has many strengths and provides good value for money. It serves its community well by providing a good quality of education for children from a wide range of different backgrounds. Children are happy here and the school has the full support of parents, who appreciate what the school does to help their children grow in maturity, confidence and learn to be responsible and caring. The care, support and guidance for children is exceptional and their personal development is good. Children make good progress overall, including in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). From an overall below average start they consistently meet national expectations. The curriculum is of good quality and the school provides a rich and extremely varied programme of extra curricular activities.

There are a few areas where improvement is needed. Boys do not usually perform as well as girls and, although most children reach their targets, few children attain the highest levels. The numbers of children with learning and behavioural difficulties is increasing and the school has not been able to secure sufficient support to deal effectively with all their needs. Subject management, although satisfactory, has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. These weaknesses are well understood by the school. There was close agreement between the school's evaluation of its position and that of the inspectors. Inspectors acknowledge the school's many strengths and its substantial improvement since the last inspection. It has good leadership and management and a staff committed to do what is best for children. As a consequence, it has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the support available for children with learning and behavioural difficulties.
- Raise the attainment of the more able children and of boys.
- Improve subject management.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well and meet their targets. Standards are broadly average and have been at this level for several years. This represents good achievement overall because, although the school educates children with the full range of capabilities, the majority of children start from a low base.

Within this overall picture, girls achieve more highly than boys, and relatively few children go on to reach the higher grades in the national tests. The numbers of children have fallen since the last inspection and the proportion of children with learning difficulties has increased, including those with learning and behavioural problems. These children often make good progress because the school provides a number of successful intervention programmes and because they are managed well in class. However, the support available to teachers to provide effectively for such children at

all times is less than is needed, especially since the distribution of children with learning difficulties is not even, being greater in some classes than others. When teachers have insufficient support, the learning needs of all children are not always successfully met.

Children get off to a good start in Reception. They enter school with skills and knowledge that are generally below average, and by the time they enter Year 1 they have caught up.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is very good. The school has a high degree of success in promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. Children enjoy school and they feel safe and happy here. Attendance is typical of that seen in most primary schools. Behaviour is good. Children with behavioural difficulties have a good understanding of their problems and try hard to cope with them. In the most demanding cases the school has found it necessary to exclude children occasionally for a short period. This has been accomplished in a sensitive way with no loss in trust between the child, the family and the school. Girls have very good attitudes to learning and take a great pride in their work. Boys also have good attitudes, but not as good as the girls and this shows in their work, especially in writing. Children show respect for the staff; relationships are very good and children trust their teachers and helpers. They grow in maturity and responsibility as they move up the school. For example, older children routinely look out for younger ones, the members of the school council bring solutions, not problems, to their meetings, and children use initiative; for example, in arranging fundraising events to achieve an objective.

Through the excellent opportunities provided by the school, children are making very good progress in knowing about and adopting healthy lifestyles and keeping themselves safe and strong. They have a developing sense of the contribution they can make in the school and in the wider community, and they benefit significantly through the very effective link the school has forged with a local special school. Good progress in developing the basic skills is ensuring their future economic well being, and this is considerably enhanced by the social skills they are learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning varied between satisfactory and outstanding, and it was good overall. Relationships between teachers and children are very good. Behaviour is managed very well. Teachers give children clear information about what they are expected to learn in each lesson. They arrange children into groups, generally by ability, and plan work at an appropriate level for each group, often providing extension work for the most able. The range of ability is very wide, and teachers plan separate work for up

to five groups to match the work closely to children's needs. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to teaching and learning. The school has effective systems for identifying when children are falling behind, and special work is arranged for small groups to help them catch up. These sessions are taught by teaching assistants. They are very successful and hugely enjoyed by the children, who love the extra attention they receive. Teaching assistants and parent volunteers also provide good support within classes, working to the plans provided by the teachers. Not all lessons are as interesting and engaging as the best. Just occasionally, children's work reveals lower expectations of what can be achieved and less than helpful marking. In classes where a large proportion of children have learning and behaviour difficulties and where the majority are lower attaining, there is quite often insufficient support for the teacher to successfully meet the needs of all the groups on her own or with only limited support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good with outstanding opportunities for enrichment and extra curricular activities. The curriculum for all pupils, including that for the Foundation Stage is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. Relationship and sex education is provided. There is an appropriate emphasis on children acquiring the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT), although scientific investigation skills could be promoted more effectively. For those children who fall behind in their work, the school has a range of curriculum resources it can call upon to help them catch up. The previous inspection praised the school for its wide range of extra curricular activities. This range is now even wider. Children enjoy and learn from the variety of visits and visitors, sports, arts events, performances, competitions and clubs that the school provides. Staff are constantly seeking new approaches to the curriculum to improve learning. 'Goldentime' has recently been introduced, providing clubs during school time which give children unusual curriculum opportunities, such as gardening, and where they can work with children of different ages. During the inspection at least two new curriculum developments were underway: in children learning to play musical instruments in an orchestra, and in exploring thinking skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for children is outstanding. The school works hard and successfully at developing each child as an individual, ensuring their well-being and promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It builds children's self esteem and confidence well. The care and support for the children is perhaps best seen in the patience with which staff listen to them and the clear valuing of what children say. The procedures for safeguarding are robust and are regularly reviewed. Children at risk are supported very well, including those at risk of exclusion. The school works closely with families to promote good attendance, and it has strong links with the community and support services, especially the speech therapy service, to promote

speaking and listening. The school works closely with the before- and after-school club, and more recently, with the pre-school setting, to provide 'wrap around' care for children and families. Children are given responsibility. Many of them serve on the school council and they help determine the rules for behaviour. The 'buddy' system, where older children take care of younger ones, works very effectively. The school's work with the nearby special school is of particular significance as the children meet children with disabilities on equal terms and gain immensely from working together.

The school has rigorous systems for tracking and monitoring children's progress. Teachers are aware of the level of each child's work and they set challenging targets for improvement. Children's guidance is good, but too much is expected of teachers to support children with learning and behavioural difficulties on their own.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear direction for the school. Her commitment to the children is of the highest order. In particular, she has played a major role in promoting their very good personal development and in developing the school to serve the needs of the wider community. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher. The governors are closely involved in the work of the school. The chair of governors provides outstanding commitment and support. The whole staff work well as a team and the school provides a most attractive environment for children's learning. Subject management was not fully effective at the time of the previous inspection and this still remains the case. Children's work in the different subjects shows variation from class to class because weaknesses have not been identified and remedied with sufficient rigour. The provision for children with learning and behavioural difficulties could be managed more effectively. Many children have quite pressing needs but almost no children are receiving outside support.

The school has the confidence of its parents and they are fully consulted. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, although it should be more concise and focused. There was close agreement about strengths and areas for development between the school and the inspectors. There has been substantial improvement since the previous inspection in all areas except subject management, and standards have been maintained during a time when children have entered with lower levels of attainment. There is a good capacity for further improvement since the school's determination to overcome barriers to children's learning is strong.

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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? | 2 | 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 | 3 | 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? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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? | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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 | 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, Mrs Preece and I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our time at Weaverham Forest. I am writing to let you know what we found.

The things we think are good about your school

- We like the way you get on so well with your teachers and how they are approachable and patient with you and teach you well.
- That you enjoy school, do good work and behave well.
- We think the school is a very welcoming place. Mrs How and Mrs Burdett make visitors, parents and everyone feel at home. You have a very attractive school with lots of interesting displays of your work that made it a stimulating place to be.
- You learn lots about becoming good citizens of the future through the school council and the older ones of you take good care of the younger ones. You are putting what you have learned about healthy living and staying safe into practice.
- We were impressed by the range of interesting visits and activities you take part in. It's a pity we couldn't join Year 3 when they went to the Wingate Centre, we would have enjoyed that. Mrs Preece really enjoyed the 'Tuning-In' music session on Wednesday afternoon and I thought the cakes that Mrs Gibson's class baked smelled delicious.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make the school even better. They are:

- we noticed that girls usually do better than boys with their work; so we have asked the teachers to help the boys catch up
- we think children who find learning and behaving difficult need extra help
- to make sure all the more able children reach the highest levels they can
- we asked the teachers who look after each subject to make sure that your work was as good as it could be by checking you always do your best and that your work is marked so that you know how to get even better.

Of course, you will have a big part to play in making some of these improvements happen, especially the boys!

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection.