



Dee Point Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111218
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278623
Inspection dates 29 March 2006 to 30 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Paul Bamber CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blacon Point Road
School category	Community		Blacon
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Chester, Cheshire CH1 5NF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01244 373072
Number on roll	205	Fax number	01244 372057
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms T Coathupe
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Dave Williams

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. Its roll has declined from 431 to 205 in the six years since it was last inspected. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The socio-economic deprivation of the school's catchment area is twice the national average and a high proportion of children is entitled to a free school meal. There is above average mobility and a higher than average proportion of looked after children. The proportion of children with statements of special educational need is nearly three times the national average because the school has a facility for 24 children with moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to children's achievement and standards, in the quality of teaching and learning and the leadership of subjects. The school is currently ineffective and does not offer value for money.

Standards are not high enough in writing throughout the school and in mathematics in Key Stage 2. More-able children underachieve, but vulnerable children achieve satisfactorily because they are well supported. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate overall. Teachers' expectations are too low and there is a lack of rigorous planning and assessment which contribute significantly to children's underachievement. The curriculum is satisfactory, enriched by a range of activities outside the classroom, but with weaknesses in the way it promotes children's basic skills. Children behave satisfactorily and they generally have positive attitudes to school. They know what represents a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. Children are well cared for, particularly the most vulnerable. However systems to ensure that children make good progress have not been in place long enough to impact on raising achievement. The school is well led by a dynamic headteacher who has only been in post for five terms and is having a positive impact on raising performance. The very newly appointed deputy headteacher and the governing body are supportive of his aims. However, weaknesses in subject co-ordination mean that the overall quality of leadership and management is only satisfactory. The headteacher is clear about the significant weaknesses that exist and self-evaluation is satisfactory overall, despite some rather over optimistic assessment of the school's overall effectiveness and of the quality of teaching and learning. Until recently, several personnel problems have meant that the school has not been in a position to improve sufficiently. These have now largely been resolved and, despite unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection, the school is now in a position to move on and improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in writing and for more-able children throughout the school.
- Improve standards and achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Improve teachers' planning and assessment and raise their expectations of the quality and quantity of work that children produce.
- Make sure curriculum leaders analyse standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects in order to raise achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards across the school as a whole are too low. The school's own view that achievement is satisfactory overall is based on satisfactory achievement in Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. However, this underplays the significant underachievement in Key Stage 2 and of more-able children. Most children enter the Nursery with standards well below expectations for children of that age. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless many enter Year 1 not reaching the goals set nationally for them, especially in reading, writing and number. Children's achievement continues to be satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, apart from in writing, which is a weakness despite recent improvements. The proportion of children reaching average levels in tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 increased in 2005, but few were above average. In Key Stage 2 achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards have been low over the last five years, despite a gradual improvement. Standards in reading are broadly average and in 2005 there was a good improvement in the proportion of Year 6 children attaining the above average level. This looks set to continue this year. Only one fifth of children in Year 6 reached the average level in writing in the 2005 national tests. As a result of effective intervention this proportion is likely to treble this year and be broadly average, although more-able children are still underachieving. Standards in mathematics are well below average throughout Key Stage 2. Standards in science improved well in 2005 but are forecast to be less good this year. In recent years children's performance in the national tests has fallen well short of the school's targets and this year, although it is likely that targets in reading and writing will be broadly met, they will not in mathematics. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those otherwise vulnerable children achieve satisfactorily because of good support and effective assessment of their needs, something lacking for many other children.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children's personal development is satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Behaviour has improved in the past year and is now satisfactory. A strong anti-bullying policy has led to better relationships. Children say that playtimes are more agreeable than they used to be, but they express concerns about some behaviour in lessons. Most children are happy to come to school, describing it as 'friendly, safe and enjoyable'. However, children also feel that teachers could make lessons more fun. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Children show respect for others and work co-operatively in groups when given the opportunity. Children know how different cultures celebrate their beliefs and understand the heritage of their local area. They are aware of Christian values and the impact of their actions on others. Children gain a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe. They accept the responsibilities of being school counsellors and playground buddies. They enjoy performing with the choir and band. Although they gain some of the life skills they will need for the future,

their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are underdeveloped. This means they are not sufficiently prepared to meet the challenges of the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. The school has a more optimistic view based on recent improvements, but acknowledge weaknesses exist in Key Stage 2 and in the teaching for more-able children. In the Foundation Stage, most children are taught satisfactorily enabling them to make expected progress. However, planning and assessment are not sufficiently rigorous to effectively cater for the needs of more-able children. In Key Stage 1, there is a similar picture. In Key Stage 2, there is some inadequate teaching and many lessons where strengths just outweigh the weaknesses, although teaching is good in Year 5. In general, teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of children's work are too low. This applies particularly to children of average ability and even more so to the more-able, where tasks set for them are not challenging enough. Too many teachers fail to assess exactly where children are in their learning and so are in a poor position to set tasks that sufficiently meet children's needs. Marking is often exclusively congratulatory rather than helping the children to improve. However, as a result of the training and advice teachers have had from the headteacher and the local authority, there have been improvements in the teaching of writing over the last year. The support provided for vulnerable children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is largely effective and plays a significant part in these children's satisfactory achievements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets statutory requirements. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, but curricular planning does not cater well enough for more-able children. Teachers' plans are firmly rooted in National Curriculum guidance, but lack creativity. For example, children are not encouraged to apply their basic skills in other subjects enough. The provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship has recently improved and is now good. There is greater focus on raising children's self esteem and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning. Children are competently taught what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how to avoid potentially dangerous situations. There is a satisfactory programme of visits and visitors to school which add variety and richness to learning. Children have enjoyed Theme Weeks that focus on art or physical education. After school clubs for art, games, ICT and music are popular and enrich children's experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The quality of care has improved since the headteacher's appointment and is now good. Parents view the school as a place where children are listened to and valued. Many compliment the school because of the way bullying has been tackled and comment that 'children's attitudes and behaviour have improved'. Children say that school is a safe and healthy school where they are well looked after. Systems to ensure children's safety and their well-being are robust and child protection procedures are in place. Support for the most vulnerable children is well managed and their particular needs are dealt with very sensitively, helping them to achieve in their work. Use of assessment data to track children's progress and set targets for them is in the early stages of development and consequently is not yet having enough impact on improving standards and achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has brought about many improvements in a short time. He has faced difficult personnel problems and a certain resistance to change. His dynamism, determination and vision have guided the school through this difficult period. Together with a very recently created, committed leadership team, including a very new deputy headteacher, the headteacher has put the school in a position where it is capable of improvement. Tough decisions have been made that have laid the foundations for better quality teaching and learning and higher achievement. The supportive governing body has backed the headteacher fully in driving change and barriers to improvement have now been substantially removed. There are still weaknesses in curriculum leadership. This is because subject co-ordinators are insufficiently involved in ensuring good performance. Much of this has been due to a lack of training at this level of management. The headteacher has ensured that training linked to key areas for improvement, for example, writing has been provided. Clear evidence of recent improvements exist in the more positive links with parents, the calmer atmosphere, better behaviour, warmer relationships and in the productive links forged with the local authority and the community. These have all contributed significantly to children's better personal development, well-being, curriculum and care. Rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate children's and staff's performance are in place, but are too new to have had the required impact upon improving achievement and teaching and learning. Overall, the school's improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate, but the recent changes have resulted in some demonstrable improvements in provision and signal the school's capacity to improve further.

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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?	4	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 us so welcome during the day we spent in your school. We really appreciated the way in which you chatted to us and let us know so many interesting things about your school. We would like to share with you those things we thought were really good about your school and those things we felt it could do quite a lot better.

What we liked most about your school:

- most of you seem to enjoy school, especially clubs and residential visits
- you are well cared for, especially those of you who need extra help or support
- your headteacher knows exactly what needs improving and how to do it.

There are some things that we feel would make it better:

- you need help to improve your writing, and, for those of you in Key Stage 2, your mathematics
- many of you who find your work a bit easy should be given harder work to do
- some teachers need to plan your work better so that you can make more progress
- teachers should mark and assess your work more thoroughly and give you more information on how to improve it
- some teachers in charge of subjects could help you to achieve better.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you continue to really enjoy school and do very well with your work and carry on trying really hard.