



Tilston Parochial CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111284
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278645
Inspection dates 6 March 2006 to 7 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Tilston
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Malpas, Cheshire SY14 7HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01829 250204
Number on roll	95	Fax number	01829 250674
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr S Adie
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J Johnson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school that serves a socially and economically advantaged rural area, as reflected in the very low uptake for free school meals. The school has part-time nursery provision for four afternoons per week. There are few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the school has a higher than average percentage of children with a statement of additional needs. Children's attainment on entry is broadly average. The school is a member of a local federation of small rural schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the school's evaluation that this is a good school. It is valued highly by parents and children because of its warm welcome, delightful family atmosphere and high standards. Children make good progress through the school because teaching is effective for all age groups. Standards are above average in all year groups. Children's spiritual development is exceptional, partly because the rural locality and the links with the church are used so effectively. Also outstanding are:

- children's attitudes and desire to learn
- their understanding of how to stay fit and healthy
- their preparation for the next stage of their learning
- activities which enrich the curriculum, particularly links with other schools
- governance of the school.

The quality of provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Teachers make effective use of the national guidelines and provide a good balance between direct teaching and learning through play. Assessment has not fully reflected the children's ability at the end of the year in the recent past, but this has improved following staff training.

Effective team work amongst staff and governors has led to good management. Parents are pleased that their views have been sought and acted upon. Good use of test data has identified strengths and areas for development, though management has found it difficult to evaluate children's year on year progress because the tracking system lacks refinements such as yearly targets. Prompt action has already improved many things, for example, the accommodation, and this indicates that the school has good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve the expertise of staff in assessing children in the Foundation Stage by providing training and opportunities to discuss assessment with Foundation Stage staff from other schools.
- Improve the quality and usefulness of the tracking system by noting children's attainment using National Curriculum levels more rigorously and setting each child yearly targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress through the school because teaching is consistently effective in meeting their needs. The overall attainment of year groups varies in percentage terms because pupil numbers are small. Attainment on entry is average, though there are a few children with exceptional language skills for their age. Children achieve well through the school. Standards are high in all year groups and in some of

them exceptionally high. The school sets and often meets very challenging targets in Year 6.

Standards in the Foundation Stage are above average with children having very good personal skills and speaking exceptionally confidently. In 2005, children in Year 2 achieved average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and the school recognises that higher attaining children could have achieved even more. Training and support for staff has led to all current Year 2 children being challenged more. Standards in Year 2 are now above average. In Year 6 last year, standards in English, mathematics and science were in the top five percent nationally and were a credit to staff and the children alike. The current Year 6 children are achieving well and their standards are above average. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The inspection found that children's personal development is good rather than the school's view that it is outstanding. This is because whilst children behave well, especially in the cramped conditions of the hall during assembly and lunchtime, there is some immature behaviour amongst older children. Also the school council relies too heavily on the headteacher for leadership.

Children love their school, lessons and staff and have a great desire to learn. This is reflected in their high attendance rate and good punctuality. Older children have managed stalls at the Christmas fair and this type of experience coupled with good literacy and numeracy skills and exposure to modern foreign languages provides them with an outstanding platform for the next stage in their learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children's experiences and understanding of the wonders of the natural world are outstanding. Children also have an outstanding knowledge of what is and is not good for them, for example, many select a healthy option at lunchtime and know to exercise regularly. Children know how to stay safe in simple ways, like crossing the road carefully. The school council ensures that children's views are heard and their suggestions acted upon, but none of the children currently assist with its organisation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are comparatively few children in each class so each one has more individual attention than in most other schools.

Children in Foundation Stage learn quickly through skilfully planned play activities and well thought out adult-led tasks. Adults listen carefully to what children have to say, which builds their self esteem. In Years 1 to 6, teachers use their knowledge of what children have already learned to plan stimulating activities for them. They promote

children's literacy and numeracy skills particularly well, not just in English and mathematics lessons, but in other subjects too, for example, the use of graphing skills to display results in science. Teachers should more consistently share with children what they will learn, so that children can assess the quality of their own learning at the end of the lesson.

The information from the school's comprehensive assessment systems is used well to improve teaching and the curriculum. The system to track children's progress through the school gives an overview but does not provide sufficient detail for managers to evaluate each child's year on year progress closely enough. Effective management has improved staff's understanding of how to assess the youngest children. Testing and teachers' observations are used well to identify children who need additional support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs of the children. There is an emphasis on English and mathematics. This is helping children to reach above average standards in those subjects and to use their skills in other subjects. The Foundation Stage curriculum follows the national guidelines closely. Children learn through play and this fosters their personal and social development particularly well. In Years 1 to 6 the personal, social, emotional and health education programme has helped children to understand relationships and broadened their awareness of healthy lifestyles.

The programme of enrichment activities is outstanding. Both parents and children praise the commitment of the staff in offering such a wide range for a small school. All activities are very well attended. One aspect of effective management is the sharing of visiting musicians and theatre groups with another local school. The local environment is used particularly well to support studies in, amongst other things, religious education, science and geography.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents feel that their child is safe and well cared for in school. They like very much the 'family atmosphere' and feel that staff know the children and their families well and can thus respond quickly to any child's individual needs. Procedures to protect children and staff, such as risk assessments, child protection and health and safety are securely in place. Children feel safe and free from bullying and are frequently encouraged to consider the feelings of others.

Parents and the community are kept informed of events through lively newsletters. The information allows them to help their child at home. Parents are delighted that the school has responded to their minor concerns about reports and now feel that they get good information about their child's progress. Parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are consulted and kept fully informed about their child's needs and the additional support offered by the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Governors, parents, staff and children all think that the new headteacher has had a major impact on their school. Changes both major and minor have been skilfully made, in consultation with all parties, so that staff and governors feel that they are a very strong and effective team. The school has a clear picture of its strengths and areas for development. Forward planning has prioritised raising standards still further by training for staff, strengthening community links and improving the environment. The school supports the learning of all children equally well. Much progress has already been made with extensive building work and more challenge for higher attaining children in Years 1 and 2. The school has good ability to improve still further and gives good value for money.

Curriculum coordinators have welcomed having full responsibility for their subjects. They have started to monitor the impact of teaching and learning and have extensively analysed test data and used the information to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is expertly managed. Governance is outstanding. The governing body is extremely conscientious in all that it does. It is well organised, has excellent methods for gathering its own information about the work of the school and uses the expertise of its membership to the benefit of the children.

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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?	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	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	1	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	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2	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

Thank you for playing such a full part in the recent inspection of your school. I agree with you, your parents and your teachers, that you attend a good school, which has some outstanding features. I found you to be wonderfully confident and very keen to learn. You astonished me with your understanding of how to stay fit and well and I think that you are extremely well prepared for your next school. Consistently good teaching in all classes helps you make good progress and reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. You are usually very well behaved, especially in your tiny school hall during lunch and assemblies. I congratulate your teachers on the outstanding selection of extra activities, like visits, musicians, theatre groups and sports clubs, they offer you. There is nothing major wrong with your school. I have asked the headteacher to do two things which I think will help improve it even further. First, I would like her to continue to train staff in how to assess you in the first few years of your schooling. Second, I want her to improve the system the school has to track your progress through the school. You can also help improve your school by continuing to try hard in every lesson and always being on your best behaviour.

Like you and your parents, I feel that your headteacher has made a very big impact on your learning in a short time. She is really good at involving people in making decisions, including you through the school council. You take responsibility well for small jobs around the school, but I think that you could do more with the school council, for example, being the chair or secretary. I feel that the school's governors do an outstanding job, mostly in the background, and help make the school the quality place it is for you.

You have played a big part in this inspection. Everyone I spoke to was very kind, polite and very confident. I thank you for your friendliness and unfailing courtesy towards me and wish you and the school well for the future.