



Warrington St Ann's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111298
LEA Warrington
Inspection number 278649
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 14 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Marguerite McCloy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lathom Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Orford
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Warrington, Cheshire WA2 8AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 632210
Number on roll	203	Fax number	01925 637846
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev S Parish
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Susan Fox

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. Ann's Church of England Voluntary Aided school is an average sized primary school with just over 200 pupils on roll, which includes 38 children attending part-time in the nursery. The school is situated in the Orford area of Warrington, near to the town centre. There are high levels of social deprivation in the area which consists of predominantly local authority and rented housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The majority of pupils are of white British background. Less than 6% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and seven of these are currently learning English as an additional language. A slightly above average proportion of pupils leave or join the school other than at the start of the academic year. There has been some instability due to changes in staff over the last two years although staffing is now stable.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St. Ann's CE primary school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has a number of strengths. This matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. The school is an important part of the local community and is valued and highly regarded by parents. Its emphasis on personal development and well being as well as care, guidance and support is a strength which ensures that every child really does matter. This results in children feeling happy and safe in school. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are particularly good and along with improvements in the quality of teaching these are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress they make in lessons.

Despite a significant proportion of pupils starting in the nursery with well below average skills, the good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that all children have a good start to their school life. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and in an increasing proportion of lessons teaching is good.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below average in the 2005 national tests, particularly in English and mathematics, although achievement and progress is satisfactory overall and there are positive signs that standards are now on an upward trend.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has successfully managed some recent staffing difficulties and strong team work is now evident across the school. Self evaluation is generally accurate, although insufficiently focused on providing clear evidence of the effectiveness of actions taken to raise standards.

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Recent developments including the strengthening of teaching lead the school to have good capacity to improve. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in order to raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Further strengthen the quality of teaching so that it is more consistently good or better, raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and making more effective use of assessment to inform planning.
- Strengthen whole-school leadership and management by improving self-evaluation and action planning to focus more clearly on the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation is accurate in judging that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Whilst standards of attainment are below average when pupils leave the school at the age of 11, the progress pupils make in relation to their capabilities is

satisfactory overall. A significant number of children enter the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) with skills which are well below average, particularly in communication and language development. They make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 many have reached the levels expected of them. In the 2005 assessments, Year 2 pupils reached standards which were average in reading, writing and mathematics. An average proportion of pupils achieved the higher level in writing and reading, although fewer achieved this in mathematics. These results represent an improvement on the school's Key Stage 1 results in 2004, and the current Year 2 pupils are also on target to reach standards which are close to the national average.

The school's Key Stage 2 results in the 2005 national tests in English, mathematics and science were well below average, particularly so in mathematics where attainment was very low. In addition, very few pupils reached the higher than average level. Although these results would appear to indicate inadequate progress since Key Stage 1, they were affected by the movement of some pupils in and out of that year group during Key Stage 2. In addition, evidence presented by the school identified difficult circumstances for a small number of pupils who had not performed to their capabilities. Based on inspection evidence, the school's English targets for the current Year 6 are challenging but achievable. The school itself has identified that its published targets in mathematics are over-ambitious based on its assessments of those pupils' previous work. However, scrutiny of work in Year 6 indicates that pupils are well on the way to achieving their individual targets. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and vulnerable pupils make good progress due to the additional support they receive. The progress made by higher achieving pupils is satisfactory at present, but the school is aware of the need to raise achievement further for these pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's view that children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is improving and is currently in line with the national average. The inspectors were impressed by the children's conduct; particularly their good behaviour and positive attitudes to each other, staff and visitors. Children enjoy their lessons where they are attentive, work cooperatively and contribute confidently. The school places a high emphasis on pupils' well-being in order to remove potential barriers to learning. Children are encouraged to express their

feelings and the school develops their self-esteem through a range of strategies such as the 'morning meetings' and lunchtime activities. Children say they enjoy school and feel safe, secure and cared for and know who to talk to if they have any problems or difficulties. The school promotes the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise, including through 'Phys kids' activities. The nurture base 'There 4 U' makes a valuable contribution to the emotional well being of children who may be struggling with aspects of their school or home life. Members of the school parliament take pride in representing their peers and value being listened to, taken seriously and encouraged to play a part in decision making. For example they keep a meeting record book and

have written directly to parents about the issues of smoking, driving with due care and attention, and double parking.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school judges teaching and learning to be satisfactory overall with some strengths and inspectors agree. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children enjoy their learning and make good progress from a low starting point in basic skills and personal development. An increasing proportion of teaching across the school is now good and this is leading to an upward trend in standards and achievement.

The positive impact of recent staff development and a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice can be seen in lessons. Common features of the teaching include careful planning and good use of questioning skills and resources, including interactive whiteboards. Support staff are effectively deployed and work well alongside teachers. Pupils are made aware of what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. The classrooms are well organised to provide a busy and attractive environment with prompts and guidance to support pupils' learning.

Teachers prepare their lessons carefully and seek to address the needs of pupils by setting activities at the right level. This is largely successful in literacy. However, they are less secure when planning for pupils' next steps in using and applying their mathematical skills. In some lessons, expectations are too low and planning fails to meet the needs of higher achievers, which leads to a slower pace with pupils not always making the progress they should.

The best learning is characterised by lively and imaginative teaching with good pace, stimulating activities and effective questioning. In these lessons, teachers focus the learning well and pupils are enthused, such as when the New Zealand Haka dance was skilfully used to enliven a physical education and dance lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Assessment procedures and the tracking of progress are improving but lack consistency in how the information is used to inform the teaching. Individual targets are set in English and mathematics and pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve. Although there are examples of effective marking of children's work, the use of developmental comments to guide pupils is not embedded across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are given clear support and guidance which enables them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with several strengths and is soundly planned throughout the school. There is a strong emphasis on personal and emotional development and this is effective in encouraging self-esteem and independent thinking.

The school is increasingly aware of children's strengths and weaknesses in basic skills, so standards are gradually improving at Key Stage 1. However, a curriculum that fully challenges and extends the learning of all pupils is not yet fully in place. Useful connections are made between subjects, but pupils are not always taught to apply what they learn in one area, for instance mathematics, to work in other subjects.

Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors and particularly through close links with the church and the local community. There are a good number of clubs and extra curricular activities such as those in art, sports, music and computing. These opportunities are well attended, have a good impact on learning and contribute well to pupils' health and enjoyment. Children from the nursery upwards enjoy and benefit from learning French. Pupils spoke very positively about the experiences they had gained from a residential visit to Robinwood Adventure Centre.

The development of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship skills are well promoted in the school in a number of ways, including through class discussions and the popular school parliament. These encourage children to express their feelings and opinions, whilst discussing important issues.

The school provides good accommodation and resources which make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and enjoyment. The use of information communication technology (ICT) by teachers and pupils has steadily improved due to the recent development of the computer suite and the installation of interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Each classroom has a themed role play area which is well designed to enhance pupils' learning and develop their speaking and listening skills. In particular the school is rightly proud of its covered outdoor play area which provides a valuable contribution to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good with some outstanding features. Pupils are very well cared for and there are effective health and safety and child protection procedures in place. A typical comment from one child was 'teachers always listen and help us to feel safe'.

Consequently, pupils are happy to come to school and feel safe there. Pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported well through the effective links which are established with outside agencies. Social development is thoroughly monitored and sensitively evaluated.

Parents appreciate the school's high levels of support. One expressed the views of many by saying that 'this is a caring school where everybody works together and is valued'.

A breakfast club and morning meeting where pupils can express their feelings and emotions gives a positive start to the day for many children and has a big impact on improving their learning and concentration. There are good procedures for helping those who join the school during the academic year. As a result, new arrivals settle quickly and grow in confidence. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are becoming more aware of their targets for achievement. However they are not given consistently clear guidance about exactly what they need to do in order to reach the next level.

The school is dedicated in caring for and supporting each child. All members of staff know the pupils well and children are confident and secure in these relationships. When extra support is needed on occasions for particular children who are troubled and find school difficult, the nurture base is a positive and valuable resource and the provision of counselling to individual pupils plays a key role in providing high quality support for these children. All adults praise and encourage children for their efforts, helping them to grow in self- esteem and confidence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school judges leadership and management to be satisfactory overall with some areas of strength and inspectors agree. The school's caring ethos owes much to the strong commitment of senior leaders, governors and all staff to the welfare and personal development of all pupils, whatever their circumstances. The headteacher has successfully managed a number of staffing difficulties in recent years which had contributed to slow progress in improving standards, and strong team work is now evident. The leadership is receptive to advice and support from local authority consultants, who are currently working with staff on an intensifying support programme aimed at raising standards in English and mathematics. The whole-school commitment to this, and the positive way in which the school acts upon advice contributes to the school's good capacity to improve.

The headteacher and her staff have the confidence and support of the parents, as reflected in the questionnaires returned to the inspection team. The school is committed to working closely with parents, not just as partners in their children's education, but also as learners themselves. A number of family learning courses are well attended, and parents who attend a 'drop-in caf,' in the adjacent church greatly value and benefit from this provision.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, although the key targets for improvement at that time have not been fully achieved. Standards in ICT are now rising due to improved facilities and staff training. Governors are well informed and aware of the school's main strengths and areas for development. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 remain stubbornly low, although signs of improvement are now clear.

The school maintains a range of data on pupils' standards and progress which is beginning to be used well across the school to set more specific improvement targets for different groups and individual pupils. The leadership team is aware of the need for the school's development plan to clearly emphasise the key priority of the school which is to improve achievement. The large quantity of existing action plans reduce their manageability and clarity in detailing what needs to be done to improve learning outcomes for pupils, or in measuring the impact of whole school initiatives or staff development on these outcomes.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in some areas of monitoring, such as the scrutiny of planning, pupils' work and the observation of teaching skills. This has contributed to improvements in the overall quality of teaching, although the quality of pupils' learning remains satisfactory overall in spite of this. Senior leaders and governors recognise that the school's expectations of pupils' academic achievement should now be raised in order to improve the rate of progress for the majority of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2.

The school's expenditure per pupil is in the lower range. Taking into account standards and achievement which are satisfactory overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	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	2	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	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?	3	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?	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?	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about all the things you do and what you thought about your school.

There are a lot of good things in your school. Here are some of the things we found:

- your behaviour in lessons and around school is very good, and you get on well with each other and with the adults
- you try hard and work well in lessons
- your school takes extremely good care of you. Adults encourage you to understand and explain your feelings so that they can help you and you can help each other when things don't feel right. You tell us that you feel safe and happy and we could see that in your smiling faces!
- your school arranges visits and invites visitors in to help you enjoy your learning even more.

We have asked the headteacher and her staff to continue improving the teaching so that it is good or better all of the time. We have also asked them to make sure that you are given challenging targets so that you are expected to learn even more and make as much progress as you possibly can, especially those of you in the junior classes. You can help by working extra hard and making sure you know what the teachers are asking you to do in order to reach your targets. The main thing is to really believe in yourselves because you are special, you deserve to achieve well and you CAN do it!