



Sandiway Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111050
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288841
Inspection dates 1–2 February 2007
Reporting inspector Ann Welch

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Weaverham Road
School category	Maintained		Sandiway, Northwich
Age range of pupils	5–11		Cheshire CW8 2JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01606 883298
Number on roll (school)	204	Fax number	01606 889429
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Tony Hart
		Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Brown
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	1–2 February 2007	288841

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school is in a prosperous area of mainly owner-occupied homes in Mid Cheshire. It also draws pupils from a wider area that includes some less advantaged neighbourhoods. Most pupils have White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low, as is the number who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is similar to that found nationally. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Artsmark Gold, the Active Sportsmark, the ECO Silver Award, the Cheshire Healthy Schools status and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sandiway Primary School is a good school with outstanding features. It cares for its pupils extremely well and ensures that they leave thoroughly prepared for their next stage of education. One pupil's comment, 'Everyone works hard to make this a great school, and we're proud of it' is perceptive in its reflection of the overall ethos of the school. Parents are understandably pleased with the quality of education provided for their children.

Children start school with skills that are broadly as expected nationally, although this varies year on year. Achievement is good overall. Children achieve well in the Reception class because of the effective teaching and the stimulating environment. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, but is constrained by the fact that not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics, and girls perform significantly better than boys.

Achievement in Key Stage 2 is good and standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. This good achievement is testimony to teaching that is consistently good and, at times, outstanding. The use of new interactive white boards has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. A strong feature of all teaching is the way that academic and personal skills are taught hand in hand. Support staff work very effectively and in close partnership with teachers. The root of their success often lies in their support for pupils who have learning difficulties or those with particular talents. This contributes to the good achievement of both these groups.

Enjoyment of learning is given a high priority. The richness and variety of the school's good curriculum whets pupils' appetites for knowledge so that they are eager and attentive learners. It ensures that pupils are well aware how to stay safe both inside and outside school and how to live healthy lifestyles. Older pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the excitement and challenge provided by residential visits and speak with pride of their successes in abseiling and canoeing. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Excellent relationships result in pupils working hard and feeling valued by staff. The 'buddy' system, which pairs youngest and oldest pupils, builds caring friendships of mutual understanding and respect. Such relationships help pupils to develop into thoughtful and reliable young people and contribute very strongly to their outstanding personal development and well-being.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets the tone for the school. She is thorough and tenacious though still very caring and approachable. Hard decisions have had to be taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to cope with staff changes and absences. It is to everyone's credit that morale is very high. The governing body is knowledgeable and keeps a close watch on the work of the school. It is not afraid to hold it to account for the standards it achieves. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas that need development and this shows it has good capacity to improve. For example, it is aware that further work is needed to ensure that best practice in assessing and tracking pupils' progress, evident in upper Key Stage 2, is applied equally well throughout the school. The school's partnership

with parents is strong and it welcomes their involvement in school life. 'The children feel safe and happy and love the teachers', is a sentiment reflected by many parents. Very effective links with other schools and local businesses enhances the overall provision. With so many positive features, it is not surprising that the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1, particularly for boys and higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that the tracking of pupils' progress is as rigorous throughout the school as it is in upper Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall and standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. Due to changes in the school's intake, skills on entry to Reception are broadly in line overall with national expectations, whereas at the time of the last inspection, they were above expectations and this still applies to the older pupils in the school. Children's language skills develop particularly well in Reception and most reach or exceed the expected national goals in all areas by Year 1. As a result of an unsettled period of staff changes and absences, pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2, indicating a downward trend in recent years, particularly in the numbers reaching the higher levels in national assessments in reading and mathematics. Girls perform significantly better than boys. The current developments in tracking pupils' progress and setting targets are beginning to have a positive impact and teachers' records show that twice as many pupils as the year before are working at the higher level in reading. Standards by the end of Year 6 have been significantly above average for four out of the past five years. 2005 was a relatively low point, but standards, in English and science particularly, have improved in 2006 and are now well above average. Pupils with learning difficulties receive carefully targeted support and this enabled those in Year 6 to reach the expected standard in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. One pupil voiced the views of many as he explained, 'All our teachers do the very best for us and so that's why we really want to come.' This sentiment is borne out by attendance figures that are continually above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding with particular strengths in social and moral awareness. Staff consistently express their appreciation of pupils' efforts and praise and award their achievements. School rules are clear and the system of rewards motivates pupils extremely well. As a result, their behaviour around school is excellent. Visitors share their expertise and beliefs so that pupils are fully aware of the richness of cultures and religions different

to their own. Through the impressive school council, pupils have contributed many ideas to improve the school, notably a salad bar at lunchtime and improvements to the playground. They like the way staff listen to them and help to put ideas into practice. They speak with pride about their Healthy Schools and ECO Silver awards and their contributions to the local community including raising money for charities. Pupils respect their teachers and understand that they are at school to learn. As a result, they acquire the skills required that will help them in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are many strengths that characterise the overall good quality of teaching and learning. Teachers use a wide range of questions to consolidate, challenge and extend pupils' understanding. This promotes their learning well, especially those who need more encouragement and support. Teachers have a good understanding of where pupils are up to and what they need to do to improve further. This is most notable in upper Key Stage 2. How teachers mark work in pupils' books has been developed to include comments so that pupils also know what they need to do to improve. They explain how, 'This helps us to know how to make our work even better, it's really encouraging.' Where lessons are outstanding, for example, in 'The Big Write' lessons in Year 5 and 6, they are stimulating and move at a brisk pace and, as a result, pupils thrive and make exceptionally good progress. The pace of a few lessons, however, can be too slow and pupils lose concentration. In the Foundation Stage, adults' clear knowledge of the requirements of teaching young children ensures that learning is effective in all areas of the curriculum. Recent training for teaching assistants has resulted in well informed staff who carry out their duties competently and in a sensitive way.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curricular provision is good with outstanding features. There is a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of English, mathematics and science. These are planned well to meet the needs of all pupils in Key Stage 2. Although provision in Key Stage 1 is improving, it is satisfactory overall because not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics. The school's focus on developing writing has paid dividends and pupils competently apply their rapidly improving writing skills in other subjects. Improvements in resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and teachers' confidence to use them, has also strengthened links between subjects. The school places a strong emphasis on a balanced curriculum and this ensures that the quality of art, music and physical education is good. This has understandably earned them the Artsmark Gold and the Active Sports mark. Pupils take part in a wealth of sporting activities and extra-curricular clubs that, together with visits and visitors, make school life a rich experience. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to

experience the world of business as they work alongside people from local firms to improve their school environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The strong, caring ethos is evident in all aspects of the school's work. The very close liaison with the pre-school provision on site ensures that procedures for the induction of children into the Foundation Stage are good. Throughout the school, pupils are understandably pleased at the day-to-day care they receive. They say that they feel very safe in school and that there are always caring adults on hand to ease any anxieties they may have. One pupil expressed the views of many with the statement, 'we have no real problem with bullying here, some games may get a little rough, but teachers always help to sort things out.'

A notable strength of how well pupils are guided and supported is that they are exceptionally clear about what teachers require of them to improve their work further. These targets motivate pupils well. As one commented, 'When we hit our targets, we're so proud.' Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported because their teachers have clear and focused individual educational plans for them. Child protection procedures are in place and the school meets the latest guidelines on safeguarding children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management, well supported by governors, have set a clear direction over the last three years. The senior management team is strong and has a good track record for making improvements including raising standards at Key Stage 2, improving resources in particular for English and ICT, and developing the school environment to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Professional development is given a high priority as the school strives to improve. Improvements have been made to the way middle managers monitor and evaluate their areas, although the school is still working to better this even more. Good quality development planning includes challenging targets for the school. Development is rightly focused on improving achievement at Key Stage 1, through improving assessment and tracking procedures. The knowledgeable and increasingly well informed governors carry out their role of critical friend well. They have the expertise to check how well the school is achieving its goals. The 'Every Child Matters' agenda has a high priority with all staff, governors and parents, so much so that this has led to the outstanding provision for pupils' personal development and their care, guidance and support. The views of parents and teachers are sought and most feel that they are listened to and that their opinions are valued.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed joining your lessons and talking to you about your work. We also met some members of your school council who told us that their views are valued. We were impressed by your contribution to improving the school grounds and how the school has introduced water coolers and a salad bar at your request. We both enjoyed those very much!

Sandiway Primary School is a good school, just like you and your parents told us that it was. The school cares for you all extremely well and gives you outstanding support. Your teachers help you to achieve high standards which give you a good start to your secondary education. They see to it that you have lots of interesting activities to help you to improve many of your skills and make your work enjoyable.

We were very impressed by your positive attitudes to learning and these are helping you to succeed. The behaviour we saw in class and around the school was excellent and you all acted sensibly and maturely. Your headteacher leads and manages your school well. She takes a personal interest in each of you.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see how your school could improve further. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to help some pupils in Key Stage 1 to do even better in reading and mathematics, particularly the boys and those who are quick learners. We have asked your teachers to do more checks on how well you are doing in your work. This will help them to keep a closer eye on your progress all the way through the school so that no-one falls behind.

For your part, continue to work hard and to behave so well and so kindly. Once again, thank you for being so helpful and friendly. We wish you all the best for the future.