



Vine Tree Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111143
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288872
Inspection date 22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Arthur Markham

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Danebank Avenue
School category	Community		Crewe
Age range of pupils	5-11		Cheshire CW2 8AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 661526
Number on roll (school)	217	Fax number	01270 650367
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr L Wood
		Headteacher	Mr I Gower
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a mixed area with pupils coming from a range of social backgrounds. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is below that in most schools, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British background with only a small number from minority ethnic groups. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and is a member of the Excellence in Crewe group of schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils make good progress both academically and socially. Parents rate the school highly and appreciate the good level of care taken of their children, saying they are always happy to go to school. The school has a warm and caring atmosphere. Pupils enjoy good relationships with the staff and say they like their teachers and the way they help them to learn. Pupils, consequently, have positive attitudes to learning and most achieve well. Children in reception make good progress from their below average starting points. The high emphasis given to developing effective learning habits through independent and teacher-led activities results in most children reaching the standards expected by the time they start Year 1. Throughout Years 1 to 6, good teaching and a stimulating curriculum excite pupils who consequently work hard. They generally take care to present their work well, although handwriting is not as well developed as it should be. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average, although standards in English and science are not as high as those in mathematics, principally because too few of the more able pupils achieve the higher level.

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a key factor in their good achievement. Pupils clearly enjoy school and say they feel valued and safe. The close attention given to their personal, social, health and citizenship education results in their showing increasing maturity as they go through the school. Their behaviour is good. Pupils work together well in pairs and teams and develop good social skills, enthusiastically carrying out a range of responsibilities well. Their collections for a range of charities reflect their care and concern for others. Pupils are pleased that their views are taken into account through the work of the school council and that a number of improvements have resulted. They have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and take frequent exercise. The careful attention given to providing pupils with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and developing their personal attributes, prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher presents a good role model and has successfully created a very effective team approach within the staff. They share a strong commitment to raising standards by providing pupils with a rich diet of experiences to ensure that they enjoy learning. This is a major reason why pupils do well. Monitoring and evaluating procedures are well organised and consequently the school has an accurate view of areas needing development. Excellent links with other partners, agencies and schools greatly enhance the learning opportunities for pupils. Governors are involved and provide satisfactory support and challenge, although their role in monitoring the work of the school is not well developed.

Finances are well managed and the school provides good value for money. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the level of challenge in work presented to more able pupils in English and science.
- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children enter the reception class with skills that are below those expected for their age. They quickly develop an enthusiasm for learning and make good progress because they are presented with a rich variety of well organised activities so that most reach the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. Lively teaching and a rich, stimulating curriculum underpin the good progress that pupils make throughout Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are above average and they are average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. In three of the last five years, pupils' performance in national tests has been significantly above average. A dip in pupils' performance in 2006 was the result of too few of the more able pupils achieving the higher levels in English and science. The impact of a recent whole-school focus on improving writing and giving more attention to investigation and experimentation in science, is yet to be seen in test results. However, the work of the present pupils indicates that standards are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and the very few with English as an additional language make good progress because the support they are given meets their needs effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils really enjoy school, as indicated by their good attitudes to learning and above average level of attendance. They have good relationships with their teachers and say 'When we get things wrong they help us to understand how to make them right'. Their behaviour is good and they have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They show concern for others in their roles as 'buddies' and learn about a range of cultures, for instance, they were taking part in activities related to the Chinese New Year during the inspection. They work hard and generally take pride in presenting their work neatly, although their handwriting is not well developed. They work together well and take on responsibilities in a sensible manner. Their views are heeded through the work of the school council and a number of changes have been made as a result. Pupils know how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. Their good use of basic skills when planning events to help raise money at the school Christmas and summer fairs, together with their well developed inter-personal skills, prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good quality teaching and learning lead to pupils making good progress throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons well and clearly explain what is to be learned at the outset. Their good class management skills ensure that classes are well ordered so that pupils learn in a calm atmosphere. Clear explanations and effective questioning ensure that pupils know what they have to do. Pupils respond well to opportunities to discuss issues with their 'talking partners' and in groups. Teachers use interactive whiteboards skillfully to make learning interesting and motivate pupils. Teaching assistants work well with teachers and effectively support pupils with additional learning needs, who as a result, make good progress. However, in some lessons, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Teachers assess pupils' progress and mark their work carefully, giving them clear guidance as to how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Provision for children in the reception class is well organised with all areas of learning covered well. Throughout school, due emphasis is placed on the key skills of numeracy and information and communication technology although slight weaknesses exist in literacy for the more able and in handwriting. An impressive range of additional activities considerably enhances pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy taking part in music, sporting and drama lessons. Specialist lessons in French and Spanish enrich their learning experiences. Educational visits, visitors and annual residential trips for Year 5 bring learning to life for the pupils and develop their skills through a wide range of different experiences. The emphasis given to personal, social and health education as well as to citizenship is reflected in pupils' good personal development. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through a range of physical activities. The many opportunities that pupils have to contribute to the community through charitable events raise both their economic awareness and their understanding of others' needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils say they are confident there is someone to talk to if they have any problems or concerns. Personal development is monitored well and pupils are given good quality academic support and guidance. Pupils value the help they are given through their targets and the teachers' marking of their work, which helps them understand how they can improve. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored in order to identify where additional support is needed. Systems for supporting pupils who have learning

difficulties and the few at the early stages of learning English are good. Effective partnerships with other local schools ensure that pupils' transfer to the next stage of their schooling goes smoothly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by the assistant headteacher and staff. Monitoring of performance is thorough and the school consequently knows its strengths and weaknesses well and uses this knowledge effectively in making improvements. For example, it is taking determined action to address the identified weaknesses in pupils' writing. Subject coordination has improved since the last inspection. Subject leaders now carry out their role well and monitor their subjects carefully in order to inform development planning. Performance management is closely linked to priorities in the development plan in order to support the raising of standards. Strong links with the local community and other schools successfully enhance the learning opportunities presented to pupils. Governors carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily, although they are not involved closely enough in monitoring the work of the school, particularly in terms of standards and achievement.

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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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

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	3
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

As you know, I recently visited your school to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to me. I very much enjoyed being in your school and listening to what you had to say. I judged Vine Tree Primary to be a good school and think you are very lucky children to go there.

I particularly liked the warm and friendly atmosphere and the way the staff take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. They work hard to make learning interesting for you so that you do well. This was very clear to me because many of you told me how much you like your teachers and enjoy school. I was very impressed by the mature approach you have to your learning and how hard you work for your teachers. This is the main reason that you make such good progress and achieve well. I was also pleased to see how well you behave in lessons and around the school and how older pupils take care of the younger ones. Your awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and how to keep fit and healthy was clearly evident when I talked to some of you at lunchtime.

I was impressed by the way your headteacher and the staff work hard to give you a good education. I have asked them to make sure that you are set suitably challenging tasks in English and science so that you reach even higher standards in those subjects. I have also asked them to make sure that they help you to improve your handwriting.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Vine Tree Primary becomes an even better school.