



Elworth Hall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111163
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288877
Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Bamber

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lawton Way
School category	Community		Elworth, Sandbach
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire CW11 1TE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 764669
Number on roll (school)	175	Fax number	01270 759446
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr I Kay
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Blease-Bourne
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school has pupils who come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and who are predominantly of White British heritage. A smaller proportion than average speaks English as an additional language. A broadly average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is in receipt of a number of awards including Basic Skills Quality Mark, Cheshire Healthy School Status, Investors in People and Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with several good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils' personal development, their curriculum, and the care and support they receive are all good. Since the last inspection, standards have improved well and are now above average throughout the school. Overall achievement is satisfactory although there is some variability between subjects and key stages. More able pupils do not achieve as well as they should, especially in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics throughout the school. Progress is weaker in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 because some teachers lack sufficient confidence and expertise in these subjects. In contrast, pupils make good progress in English because teaching is more confident and challenging. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory

Pupils behave sensibly, have positive attitudes to their lessons and respond well to the many, varied experiences offered to them, in and out of the classroom. One of the strengths in the overall satisfactory quality of teaching is how well staff and pupils relate to one another. This contributes well to the positive atmosphere in lessons and around the school, and to pupils' regard for each other and adults. However, not all teachers are sharp enough in setting tasks that fully match pupils' needs. Pupils feel safe and secure and readily help each other through difficulties. For example, older pupils act as effective mediators to resolve temporary conflicts. Pupils enjoy school, attend well and are punctual. 'We don't want to miss out on anything,' pupils say. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' basic life skills. They are all well aware of the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise. Pupils are well cared for and supported.

Within the satisfactory leadership and management, the headteacher makes a strong contribution to the good aspects of the school's provision, ensuring a positive ethos, a rich curriculum and the great confidence that parents have in how well the school looks after their children. The contribution of other leaders and managers is satisfactory, but a more rigorous focus is required on how pupils' learning and achievements should improve as a result of their actions. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. Standards have risen well and pupils' competence and use of information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. There is still work to be done in raising the achievement of more able pupils. There is enough evidence to indicate that the recent elimination of some weak teaching and the way in which pupils' progress is more rigorously tracked, that the school is now in a good position to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in mathematics and science.
- Make sure that the more able pupils achieve as well as they should in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that teachers use their knowledge of what pupils know and can do to set work that consistently matches pupils' needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in order to raise achievement and to improve the quality of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. This should be so, because they enter the Reception class with skills that are well above those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and many enter Year 1 having exceeded the national targets. Progress is patchy in Years 1 and 2. Pupils progress well in speaking and reading and continue to do so throughout the school. They achieve satisfactorily in writing but a minority of pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not always reach the standards in mathematics of which they are capable. Pupils continue to progress well in English in Years 3 to 6, although a significant minority take less care in presenting their work than one would expect. In recent years, the targets set for the high proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in the Year 6 national tests have been met. However, the school has been less successful in meeting those for the number of pupils reaching the higher level. Progress has not been good enough in science over the last two years and progress in mathematics is only satisfactory, especially for the more able pupils. Those pupils with learning difficulties and of average ability make satisfactory progress. Standards and achievement in art and design are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Social skills are very good throughout the school. Parents are rightly pleased that their children clearly enjoy school and attend well. Pupils play safely and understand the importance of eating healthily. Pupils have good attitudes to school and work, behave well and develop strong basic skills. This means that they are well prepared for later schooling and life. Pupils benefit from the good links with schools and other organisations, for example, in Africa, which promote their cultural development well. Pupils of all ages contribute to decision-making through the school council which leads on important matters such as improving the external environment and raising money for charities. Strong relationships with adults and between pupils are based on mutual respect and illustrate the strongly supportive ethos of the school. Pupils welcome the many opportunities to take responsibility. The effective 'buddy' systems enable older pupils to support the younger ones. For example, there is sensitive work by peer mediators at break and lunchtimes to resolve any minor conflicts and older pupils encourage younger ones to read.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some good teaching which is exemplified by good pace, effectively organised learning, challenging tasks that match pupils' needs well and the good use of ICT. In some lessons the weaker organisation of pupils' learning and the limited challenge of the tasks set lead to only satisfactory learning, especially for the more able pupils. Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are very positive, contributing well to learning. This is particularly true of the rapport between teaching assistants and the pupils who find learning more difficult. Pupils' learning is at its best when they work together on tasks and are fully involved in assessing what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils find their work interesting, varied and enjoyable and the curriculum is good. It is particularly effective in promoting pupils' personal development. Basic skills in reading and ICT are used and developed well across other subjects. Enrichment of the curriculum is good. There is an interesting and varied number of school journeys, visiting speakers and clubs. Pupils benefit from good links with outside providers, such as the local secondary school, particularly in ICT, music and physical education. Performing arts contributes well to pupils' skills and enjoyment. For example, all Year 4 pupils learn to play the guitar and the very good provision for art has led to the school achieving the ArtsMark Gold award. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and fosters basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are good. Staff know pupils and their families well. Effective monitoring arrangements promote good attendance, behaviour and a safe and secure learning environment. Child protection and health and safety procedures and practices are in place. As a result, parents and pupils agree that the school is a secure and safe place to be. Arrangements for children starting in Reception are good and they settle quickly into school routines. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils with special learning needs are well supported through effective communication between staff, parents and external agencies. Satisfactory procedures are used to monitor and track pupils' achievements. These are beginning to identify the learning needs of individual pupils, but the resulting tasks are not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Much of the headteacher's leadership is good and this contributes well to the pupils' positive attitudes, their good behaviour, the good curriculum and to the high level of care and support provided for pupils and staff. Effective partnerships with parents, other schools and the local authority have promoted pupils' good achievements in sport, the arts and in ICT. It is in the crucial area of ensuring that pupils' achievements are good and in ensuring consistently good quality teaching that leaders and managers have been least effective in recent years. Effective action has been taken recently by the headteacher and governors to eliminate weak teaching. However, it is too early for this and for the newly introduced improvements to assessment, and to systems to track pupils' progress, to have had any significant impact on raising achievement. There is a need for subject leaders to focus their work much more specifically on improving pupils' learning and achievement in their subjects. The headteacher and governors are taking positive steps to extend the school's provision in order to support working parents. They have started a breakfast club this term and intend to offer an after-school club shortly.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Thank you for making us welcome during the days we spent in your school. We enjoyed our visit and would like to share with you those things that are good about Elworth Primary.

What is good about your school.

- You do really well in your speaking and reading.
- You behave well, take a keen interest in your lessons and join in well with the many exciting activities the school arranges.
- You are well looked after and all the adults in the school work hard to make sure that you are safe, secure and valued.
- The adults who run the school know what needs to be done to make it even better.

There are some things we have asked your school to do better.

- To make sure that your teachers help you to do better in mathematics and science, especially those of you who find work easier than others.
- For teachers to make better use of what they know about how you are getting on from day-to-day, to set you work that really helps you improve.
- We have asked the school to make sure that you all achieve well and that all your lessons are good.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you continue to really enjoy school.