

Acresfield Community Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	111205
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	288892
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Alan Hardwicke

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	165
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Greenwood
Headteacher	Mrs S Smith
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002
School address	Acres Lane Upton by Chester Chester Cheshire CH2 1LJ
Telephone number	01244 390309
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Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

The report has been amended in the following way: change to 'Description of the school' paragraph.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Acresfield is a small primary school on the outskirts of Chester, where most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The school includes a Key Stage 2 Speech and Language Centre, which takes pupils from a wider local area. These pupils are very well integrated into the school. Because of the demographic make-up of the local area the school has very high mobility with families regularly moving in and out due to parents' work commitments. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion entitled to free school meals is much lower than average. The school has the ArtsMark Gold Award, is part of the Chester Sports Partnership. It has been placed highly in the Chester City in Bloom schools' awards in recent years. There are also close links with schools abroad, particularly Germany.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Acresfield is a satisfactory school with strengths in pupils' personal and social development and in the care, guidance and support given to them. Pupils in Year 6, for example, speak highly of the ways in which they are given more responsibility and how much they enjoy these activities. They enjoy school and develop their personal and social skills very well. Although the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory overall, it views itself too optimistically in most areas and does not give enough emphasis to raising standards. While these are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, they are not yet high enough. This is why the inspection grades are lower than the school's own.

One of the school's strengths is that it fully includes pupils from the Speech and Language Centre. They make satisfactory progress alongside their peers but their particular needs mean that they start from lower levels. Since 2005 their test results at the end of Year 6 have been included in the school's figures and this has had a negative impact on the overall results. The unusually high numbers of pupils who arrive and leave partway through their primary education also has a negative impact on results. However, given pupils' average standards on entry to the school the levels they could achieve by Year 6 could be higher. For example, pupils in lower Key Stage 1 and some higher attainers in Key Stage 2 are two groups who do not make as good progress as they could. The school's good systems for setting targets mean that most pupils know their targets and are good at assessing their own progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Recent work undertaken in collaboration with the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) is having a positive effect and teaching observed during the inspection was good. The good quality curriculum is very well enriched by visits and visitors and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are enthusiastically supported by pupils. It promotes healthy lifestyles well and includes the teaching of German. The present use of accommodation for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is too crowded and limits the curriculum provision for these pupils. High quality displays add to the quality of pupils' learning and ably reflect the school's achievement of the Artsmark Gold award. The school works very well in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being and has good links with other countries.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory as is the value for money that it provides. Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. Leaders have successfully promoted pupils' care, guidance and support but not concentrated sufficiently on raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop leadership and management to ensure a sharper focus on raising standards, so as to improve pupils' progress.
- Ensure that all groups of pupils, particularly those in Year 1 and higher attainers in Key Stage 2, are given appropriate challenge to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the use of accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school with broadly average skills and by the end of Year 6 the standards they achieve are still broadly average. Their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in the foundation stage are satisfactory. At the end of Year 2, standards overall, and particularly in mathematics, have been on a downward trend for four years. Although results at the end of Year 6 in 2006 rose in English and science compared to 2005, mathematics scores continued to decline. In both 2005 and 2006, results were negatively affected by the numbers of pupils entering and leaving every year group and the inclusion of the results achieved by pupils in the Speech and Language Centre. However, analysis of the 2006 Key Stage 2 results shows that pupils who had been in school since the Reception class also made only satisfactory progress. Some groups, such as pupils in Year 1 and higher attainers in Key Stage 2, do not make as much progress as they could. Work in basic literacy and numeracy skills makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' future economic well-being. The effective work of the staff and the good quality support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils also make satisfactory progress. Recent improvements linked to work in the PLP support programme have yet to impact fully on standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are given many opportunities for personal development. They say that they thoroughly enjoy their lessons and that they get on well together. Year 6 pupils particularly enjoy supporting the Reception children and this helps them to become more mature and responsible. Because of these positive attitudes, attendance is excellent. Pupils make outstanding contributions to the community, for instance through musical activities at a local nursing home, the Cheshire Show and the Albert Hall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies and lessons both promote clear moral values so that pupils know right from wrong and understand the need for school rules. This positive atmosphere in the school helps pupils in the Speech and Language Centre to develop appropriate social skills. Behaviour is generally good, both in lessons and around the school, although that of some pupils in Year 1 is distracting to others. Pupils learn about relationships and how to get on with others and how to resolve conflicts. They share and cooperate well, for example as 'talking partners'. Pupils develop a good understanding of the benefits of healthy living. They enjoy the good range of sporting and physical activities which have been well developed through the Chester Sports Partnership and links with the neighbouring high school. Year 6 pupils are eagerly awaiting their participation in the annual enterprise project.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons seen during the inspection varied from outstanding to satisfactory and were good overall. This represents an improvement over the quality of teaching in the longer term. However, because it is so recent, this improvement has not yet had time to impact on standards. Wider evidence from pupils' books, teachers' planning and work seen around the school shows that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge of

their subjects. Most lessons now have good pace and in the best lessons pupils are beginning to make excellent progress. Teachers are good at adapting activities to help sustain pupils' concentration and to cater for different ways of learning. Pupils say that they like their lessons and that they find the work interesting and enjoyable. Pupils know their targets, which for most of them are appropriately challenging. More able pupils, however, are sometimes given work which is too easy for them, so that they do not make as good progress as they could. In some lessons pupils are not all fully involved with their work and consequently their progress is too slow. Behaviour remains good although there is a tendency for these pupils to daydream or lose concentration.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum meets the needs of the majority of pupils very well. Its strength is the enrichment provided by the many visits and visitors, extra activities and clubs, which are so much appreciated and enjoyed by the pupils. The curriculum gives pupils good understanding of health issues such as diet and exercise and they readily take advantage of the many sporting activities available to them. These activities contribute well to pupils' health and safety. Teaching assistants and specialist staff ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school's life. There is good interchange between pupils from the Speech and Language Centre and the rest of the school, which benefits all pupils. Present use of accommodation in the Foundation Stage and lower Key Stage 1 means that access to some aspects of the curriculum is difficult. Because there are so many pupils working in a small area, it is hard to provide all aspects of the curriculum, particularly those which require practical activity. This has a negative effect on pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care and support of all pupils are central to the school's life and are well promoted by all staff. Procedures are in place to ensure child protection and the safeguarding of vulnerable children. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote an environment where pupils feel safe and know that they can talk to any adult about problems or worries. Pupils are given good academic guidance through a well-established target system. They know their targets and what they need to do to achieve their goals. They use the 'traffic light' system well to evaluate their own work and know that if they choose red the teacher will give them the help that they need. Recent improvements under the PLP programme are spreading effective marking strategies so that teachers are now giving clear guidance on what pupils need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, rather than good, as judged by the school, because hitherto not all of the school's work has focussed sufficiently on raising standards. Recent work under the PLP programme is providing a clear structure, which enables the whole school to concentrate in a united way on specific areas. This means that the leadership and management are now contributing effectively to the school's capacity to improve. Key improvements in English and mathematics are being promoted, as a result of careful monitoring and subsequent

targeted action. Teaching has been effectively monitored and improvements are beginning to have an impact. Targets are effectively set to challenge pupils to do their best. However, the sharper focus now in place has not yet had time to bring about improvements in results.

Led by the headteacher, those with management responsibilities have successfully promoted pupils' personal development and well-being and their care, guidance and support. This ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to be included in all activities. These are the school's strongest characteristics. The governing body carries out its duties effectively and meets its statutory obligations. Many governors have been in post for long periods and this gives them a good understanding of the school. The headteacher's reports and presentations by subject leaders keep them suitably informed about its work. However, governors acknowledge that there is a need for them to be more actively involved in discussions about standards and how they can be improved.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	3
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	3

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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?	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.

Annex A

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	2
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 in your school. We really enjoyed meeting you all. We were pleased to hear what you and your parents told us and this helped us to find out more about your school. We think Acresfield is a satisfactory school, where teachers and other adults do many things to help you feel secure and happy. They also work hard to help you learn. Most of you behave yourselves well in lessons and around the school and this helps you do better in your work. We think that your understanding about how exercise and healthy eating make you fitter is good. We saw how much you enjoy the visitors who come to school and you told us how much you like all the visits, clubs and sports the school organises for you.

Most of you understand the school rules and this helps you to behave well in lessons and when you are around the school. There are lots of ways for you to become more mature and responsible as you get older, such as by being a school councillor, or helping to look after the Reception children. You told us that you enjoy these chances to show how sensible you can be. Some of you also told us that you are proud of your school and all the things it does for you.

We have asked your school to focus carefully on how to help you to reach even higher standards in English, mathematics and science. You can help with this too. Think about how well you are concentrating and whether you could try even harder. We also want your teachers to think of ways of using the space better for the children in the Reception and Year 1 classes, so that children can work better.