



Callands Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111214
Local Authority Warrington
Inspection number 288894
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Callands Road
School category	Community		Callands, Warrington
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire WA5 9RJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 444795
Number on roll (school)	329	Fax number	01925 633531
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr C Webb
		Headteacher	Mrs K Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Callands is a larger than average primary school. It is located in an area of mixed local authority and owner-occupied housing. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Boys outnumber the girls, most notably in the junior classes. The small number who come from minority ethnic backgrounds are English speaking. A lower than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Less than 5% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is much lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The friendly family atmosphere of Callands School is one of the main reasons why the overwhelming majority of parents speak so highly of it. It is a good school with some outstanding features. One of those is the level of care provided, particularly for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very trusting relationships ensure that pupils always feel safe. Their good attendance is indicative of how much they enjoy the curriculum with its outstanding opportunities for creative learning and healthy physical activity. Pupils behave exceptionally well around the school and their attitudes to work during lessons are often exemplary.

Achievement is good. Children begin school with broadly average levels of attainment for their age and most achieve all of their expected targets by the end of Reception in readiness for their start in Year 1. Standards and progress in Years 1 and 2, though never below average, faltered in recent years. However, the school has worked hard to rectify this. Teaching is more effective so the more able pupils, who previously underachieved, are rigorously challenged and improvements are evident.

Standards in English in 2006 were very high when compared with the national average, while in mathematics they were slightly above average. The school exceeded its targets for both subjects. The successful strategies used to boost English, which led to improved teaching and learning, are now being applied to mathematics. Pupils are making good progress towards the more challenging targets set in mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some teaching is outstanding. Creativity and challenge are significant features of most lessons and are among the reasons why pupils achieve well. The curriculum is exciting for pupils and is enhanced by an exceptional range of extra activities and links with the local high school. Despite the good provision in the Foundation Stage, children sometimes lack challenge when working on their own. Throughout the school teachers are beginning to use assessment data with increasing purpose and effectiveness. However, the targets that result from this process are not shared with pupils consistently well. As a consequence, marking in some classes is not rigorous enough and does not inform pupils about how they can improve their work.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher works tirelessly to establish a school which is a focal point of the community and of which everybody is justifiably proud. Her inclusive management style ensures that all staff and governors have a clear role in monitoring and improving the school's performance. Leaders are broadly accurate in their evaluation of the school's work. Issues from the previous report have been adequately dealt with. Professional development for all staff is planned well and linked to school priorities. Improvements in teaching, the curriculum and, currently, achievement demonstrate the school's good capacity to move forward. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils fully understand their learning targets and that marking consistently shows them how to improve.
- Make sure independent activities are sufficiently challenging for all children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The good progress made in the Foundation Stage is limited slightly when children work on their own. Achievement slows because there are too few prompts to challenge their skills and keep them focused on tasks. Standards in Year 2 are rising and pupils are achieving well. This is an advance on 2006 when fewer pupils than expected reached the higher levels in reading and writing.

Standards in English at Key Stage 2 were exceptionally high in 2006. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieved the expected level for their age and more than half exceeded that level. Standards were a little above average in mathematics and average in science. Overall achievement showed a significant improvement, being boosted by pupils' performance in English. While maintaining standards in English, the school is currently using similar strategies to tackle mathematics. Combined with rigorous analysis of progress in Years 5 and 6, these are effectively driving up mathematics standards and achievement. Although the school's main focus has been on English and mathematics, there has been some analysis of science, resulting in quicker progress in experimentation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their attendance is consistently above average and they enjoy school immensely because, as they say, 'there are always loads of fun things to do'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is first-rate. Pupils care deeply about one another and they are always prepared to help out whether in lessons or at play. All were moved by a Year 4 assembly about global education, which raised issues of social injustice suffered by children throughout the world. Behaviour in lessons, and particularly in assemblies, is impeccable. Attitudes to school are exceptional. Pupils work hard, enjoy lessons and relish the challenges of after-school clubs. The initiative they show through fundraising and work with other schools, such as joint school council meetings with the high school, enables them to develop the life skills needed to become active members of a community. Pupils know the benefits of keeping to a sensible diet and active lifestyle. Healthy snacks and lunchtime choices are popular, and sports clubs, including fencing and judo, are always well attended.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching and learning is reflected well in pupils' achievements. Purpose and enjoyment are the main thrust of teachers' planning so lessons might include, for example, practical mathematical investigations or interviews with the headteacher in order to plan her dream holiday in a suitably exotic location. Time is well balanced between practical activity and direct teaching, so pupils usually manage to complete tasks and meet objectives. Teachers use questioning well to encourage speaking and listening. They are skilled at raising pupils' self-esteem by giving them time to revise thinking and rehearse answers with a partner. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons because it is expected of them. Teachers create a can-do climate in which all pupils know that their contributions are valued. Teaching assistants work effectively with colleagues and contribute well to pupils' progress, particularly when giving support to those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The vibrant curriculum promotes good achievement overall and very high levels of enjoyment. 'Wow-Wednesdays' are a highly successful feature because of the wonderfully creative opportunities on offer. Both Year 6 classes, for example, including the teachers, are learning to play the violin, and the quality of design and technology work produced by the girls engineering club is impressive. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and writing skills, practised widely in other subjects, are recovering in Year 2. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. This helps them to achieve very well in relation to their individual targets. Learning is greatly enriched by a wide variety of events arranged to help bring the curriculum to life. The range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and foster interests outside of lesson time is exceptional, as are links with the high school which enable pupils to benefit from French and German lessons, joint residential visits and work on projects such as Schools Challenging Industry.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. There are some outstanding features within the pastoral care provided, but academic guidance contains some weaknesses. The behaviour of all pupils is exceptional as a result of clear guidance provided. Parents are fully confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils agree that disagreements are easily resolved and that bullying is a thing of the past. Procedures for safeguarding pupils in school are in place and strong personal, social and health education means that they are being equipped to make the right choices outside of school with regard to their personal well-being. Vulnerable pupils are supported extremely well. Systems

for tracking progress and setting targets are effective. The use of assessment to inform planning and to share targets with pupils is inconsistent across the school. Consequently, not all pupils know what is expected of them or are shown clearly how best to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's vision for the school is unwavering. Her caring and inclusive management style means that she has the full support of staff, governors and parents in her drive to develop Callands into a true community school. The school has successfully maintained a broad and challenging curriculum. With support from external consultants, it has improved its performance in English dramatically and is now pushing up standards and achievement in mathematics. As a result of effective professional development, managers at all levels have an increasingly important part to play in monitoring and evaluating the school's overall performance. The school knows itself well. Governors are rigorous in both their challenge of and support for the school. They are closely involved with development planning and the self-evaluation process and keep a very close watch on the school's finances.

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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	1
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	1

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?	1
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	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

As you know, Mrs Hunt, Mrs Carroll and I visited your school recently to find out how well you are all learning. We were all delighted at the very warm welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you about your school and we are really pleased that you enjoy it so much and that you are making good progress. We think your school council is doing a tremendous job.

We noticed especially how extremely well behaved you are and how much you care for one another. It was a lovely moment when you sang that wonderful blessing to each other during one of your assemblies. We also found out how well cared for you are and how much you trust and respect the adults in school who help you. We think all of your teachers do a really good job in making sure you enjoy your lessons and achieve well. You must feel really proud that there are so many activities for you after school. No wonder your school teams seem to win so often!

We did find some things which we think will make Callands an even better school, so we have asked your teachers to be absolutely clear about what you should do better when they mark your work. It will also help when you all know exactly what your learning targets are. We also think that some of the activities for the very youngest children in your school are a little too easy for them.