



Hollins Green St Helen's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111364
Local Authority Warrington
Inspection number 288939
Inspection dates 1–2 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	Birch Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Hollinfare, Warrington
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire WA3 6JS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7752935
Number on roll (school)	125	Fax number	0161 7752822
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Domville
		Headteacher	Mr Nick Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average village school attracts pupils from a wide range of backgrounds most of whom are of White British heritage. A slightly larger than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a statement of special educational need. The school is currently working towards Healthy School status.

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 most pupils achieve well, behave sensibly and enjoy their lessons. The vast majority of parents fully support the work of this popular school and rightly feel that 'it is a main factor in the village community with good links with other community groups'.

Because teachers enthuse their pupils with a desire to learn, lessons are purposeful and enjoyable, resulting in most pupils achieving well and reaching above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. The effective actions of senior staff have led to good improvements in standards over the last few years, with particularly good strides made in writing in Key Stage 2, especially amongst boys and more able pupils. Strategies to improve pupils' writing have not had the same impact in Key Stage 1. Here some lack of challenge in the teaching of writing has resulted in the more able pupils relatively underachieving. Likewise, the overall improvements in writing have not encompassed better spelling which still remains a weakness throughout the school. Personal development is well promoted and as a result pupils conduct themselves well, develop positive relationships and know that eating sensibly and taking regular exercise is likely to result in good health. The school provides pupils with many opportunities to become effective young citizens and to develop good basic life skills. As a result, there is an active school council, pupils willingly take responsibilities for routine tasks around the school and they show considerable initiative in raising funds for people less fortunate than themselves and to finance improvements to their own play equipment.

Children have a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of well planned activities and effective assessment. They progress well in all areas of their learning, but particularly in their personal, mathematical and physical development. Their ability to work independently and harmoniously is a particularly strong feature.

Pupils enjoy school not just because they are taught well but because their curriculum is interesting and diverse. Recent changes to the way in which subjects other than English, mathematics and science are taught have resulted in pupils studying themes and topics in more depth and with a better understanding of how subjects are interrelated. A diverse range of clubs, visits and visitors add considerable value to pupils' knowledge and experiences.

Pupils are well cared for and supported. Many parents praised the warm Christian, family ethos evident in the school, stating this attribute as a major factor influencing their choice of this school for their children. Pupils feel safe and secure, confident in the knowledge that there is always someone to turn to if they are troubled. The headteacher takes a prominent lead in promoting this ethos as well as successfully striving to improve standards and to raise achievement. He is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher whose contribution as a classroom teacher and as English subject leader provides an excellent role model for staff. Arrangements to support pupils who find learning or behaving well more difficult are generally good. However, some parents of these children rightly feel less well informed about the progress their

child is making. The school knows itself well and this, together with its record of good improvement since the last inspection, provides clear evidence of its good ability to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenge for the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2, especially in writing.
- Improve spelling throughout the school.
- Ensure that all parents of pupils who have individual education plans are kept fully informed at the appropriate time about their children's progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils achieve well. They enter the school with broadly expected skills and do well in Reception so that most enter Year 1 achieving the targets set for them in all areas of their learning, with a majority exceeding them in their personal, mathematical and physical development. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in reading. While a higher than average proportion achieves the expected standards in Year 2, some lack of challenge in the teaching of the more able pupils results in their underachieving in writing.

Standards have risen steadily over the last few years in Key Stage 2 and the challenging targets the school has set for its performance in the Year 6 national tests have been met or exceeded. Particularly notable was the excellent improvement in writing in 2006, a direct result of effective strategies the school had introduced to raise standards in the subject. Despite this, the school acknowledges that it must do more to improve pupils' spelling throughout the school, which remains a weakness. Pupils who find learning more difficult make similar progress to their classmates because of effective support they receive in and out of the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The vast majority of pupils behave sensibly, attend well and have positive attitudes to their work and to each other. They get on well with teachers and this contributes significantly to the positive and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are sensible as they move around the school and outside, respecting the rules governing this and the zoning arrangements in the playground. They understand the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise and the school council has improved menus and playground equipment to enable them to put theory into practice. Pupils willingly take responsibility for routine jobs around the school and contribute well to the very positive ethos that prevails. However, they do not currently display the same independence in taking responsibility for their own learning, for instance in checking that their spelling is correct. They demonstrate through their good skills that they are acquiring the tools

to equip them for life. Because the school is overtly Christian and promotes open attitudes, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Effective planning, good classroom management and rigorous assessments contribute well to children's good development in the Reception class. Good support from teaching assistants plays a major role in the good achievements of those who find learning or behaving well more difficult than other pupils. In all classes, relationships between adults and pupils are good and teachers generally manage behaviour well. They use humour judiciously and willingly listen to pupils' opinions and help them expand on their ideas. All these strengths contribute significantly to pupils' learning and the positive atmosphere characteristic of most lessons. A strength in pupils' learning is their confidence and competence in using information and communications technology and the interactive whiteboards in response to teachers' creative use of new technologies. A relative weakness in teaching in Key Stage 1 is in the lack of challenge for more able pupils, especially in writing. Throughout the school and too often, misspelled words are uncorrected, especially those that have been copied from the board, from displays or that have been repeatedly misspelled. Pupils are not encouraged to habitually look up words they find difficult to spell in the dictionary. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly good and contributes well to the high standards pupils achieve in the national tests in Year 6.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of most pupils well. There is a strong emphasis on giving pupils a secure grounding in basic skills, apart from in spelling, both academic and personal. The school ensures that pupils experience a wide range of visits, visitors and out-of-school clubs through which they develop personal skills and that add well to their achievements and to their social and cultural development. Specialist teaching in music, sport and in French enhances pupils' enjoyment and expertise well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents rightly feel that the care provided by the school is a strength. Pupils are well cared for and supported. All required procedures to safeguard them are in place and the school is very secure. There are effective arrangements to ensure that transfer from pre-school and to secondary school are as smooth as possible. Liaison with outside agencies is good and contributes well to good attendance and welfare. One or two

parents who have children with learning difficulties have justifiable concerns about how well they are kept informed about their children's progress. The school has quite recently introduced new systems to check on how all pupils progress. These are beginning to provide much more detailed information for teachers to influence the work they plan for individual pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other's strengths well. As a result, the senior management has a considerable influence on the very positive ethos prevalent in the school, on the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils and on steadily improving standards and achievement.

Effective partnerships with other schools, the local authority, the church and the local and wider community enhance pupils' experiences and personal development and have improved teaching and learning. Governors carry out their responsibilities well. Several contribute much to pupils' achievements as a result of their frequent visits into school and involvement in pupils' learning. The governing body's prudent financial management has ensured that the school has coped with a fall in its roll well and that the school continues to provide good value for money.

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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?	2
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	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 making me so welcome during the days I spent in your school. I very much enjoyed my visit to your school and think you go to a good school. I should like to share with you what I thought about your school.

What is good about your school.

- By the time you leave Year 6 you reach good standards in your work.
- You behave sensibly, obviously enjoy school and want to do well in everything you take part in.
- You receive good teaching and you are very well cared for and are safe and secure.
- The teachers who run the school know what the school needs to do to make it even better.

There are a few things I have asked Mr Roberts and the teachers do to help to improve the school even more.

- To make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 who find learning easier make better progress, especially in your writing.
- To help all of you spell better.
- To make sure that all the parents of those of you who need to have more support in your learning, are more aware of how you are getting on and how they can help you with your work.

Thank you for helping me with the inspection of your school. I hope that you continue to really enjoy school and do very well with your work and carry on doing really well.