

Capenhurst CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111271
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	300777
Inspection date	6 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Lawton
Headteacher	Miss Claire Spinks
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Capenhurst Lane Capenhurst Chester Cheshire CH1 6HE
Telephone number	0151 3392685
Fax number	0151 3399910

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized primary school is located in a rural village and draws pupils from its immediate area as well as further afield. Almost all pupils are White British and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Their needs include language problems and moderate learning difficulties. There are mixed aged groups in all classes except the Reception year. The school has the British Council International School status, has just completed a three-year Comenius Project with partner schools in Greece and Spain, has further links with the Netherlands and has gained the Arts Mark (Gold). There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for pupils and has outstanding features, which are the pupils' personal development, the quality of the school's curriculum and care, guidance and support. The quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to the positive outcomes evident in the pupils' good achievement. Pupils do well in English and mathematics so that, from levels of attainment that are broadly in line with those expected of children on entry to the Reception class, they make good progress. Standards by the time the pupils leave school in Year 6 are above average compared with schools nationally, though standards in science have not always been as good as in English and mathematics. The school has set about addressing this discrepancy but it is too early to see the impact of the measures taken.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school very much, behave exceptionally well and develop a very good awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. They take on responsibility very well, for instance in their role on the school council and the way they look out for those younger than themselves. Provision for the care, guidance and support of all pupils is excellent. The staff know the pupils very well and there are excellent procedures to keep track of how well pupils are achieving. Staff use the information very well to identify and support any pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, as are standards and provision in the Foundation Stage. Strengths of the teaching in all classes include the very good management of pupils and the excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. Staff mark pupils' work conscientiously but there is some inconsistency in practice and opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes are not always taken. The curriculum the school provides is outstanding. It is very well planned to cater for the mixed aged classes. A key strength is its international dimension in which pupils understand more about the culture of other countries through partnerships with schools abroad. Provision in art and music is also excellent.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership, monitoring the school's performance well, identifying any relative shortcomings and putting action in place to overcome them. This means the new senior leadership team has a good grasp of how well the school is doing. Self-evaluation of the school is accurate, if a little modest, and mostly matches the judgements of this inspection. Governors make a good contribution to the school and have a firm grasp of the school's performance and its key priorities. The progress made since the last inspection indicates a good capacity to improve and the school gives good value for money. Parents report that, 'the school is a valuable asset to the community'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the recent developments to the teaching of science in Key Stage 2 so that standards are above average like those in English and mathematics.
- Improve the consistency of marking of pupils' work to help pupils evaluate their work and understand how to improve it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children progress well in the Reception class thanks to the good expertise of staff and range of activities they enjoy both indoors and in the safe outdoor area. By the end of the Reception year, most children achieve the expected goals for learning in all areas of development and some are working at levels above them. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 have risen since the time of the last inspection. Last year all pupils reached the level expected of pupils nationally and high proportions did better than that in reading and writing. This good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. Standards vary from year group to year group because of their small size but there has been a rising trend in test results in Year 6 in English and mathematics. Standards were above average in these subjects in 2006. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of measures to improve standards in science, which were average in 2006. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic and have excellent relationships with one another and with staff. The high expectations of staff result in outstanding behaviour of pupils, who report that bullying is rare. They say that children are friendly and play together well and any problems are handled very well by staff. There have been no exclusions. Levels of attendance are above the average of schools nationally.

Pupils have a good awareness of how to look out for one another and how to be safe themselves. They enjoy a very good range of physical activities and learn well about keeping fit. They have a very good understanding of a balanced diet because of the focus given to this aspect both in lessons and at recreational and lunchtimes. There are excellent opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors, road safety officers and recycling monitors. Pupils develop a very good awareness of the needs of others. They have had good opportunities to learn about business and learn to work independently and as a team, which are important skills to take forward to high school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Strengths of the teaching include the high expectations that teachers have for their pupils and this is evident in the very good presentation of work in pupils' books. Lessons have good pace and pupils listen exceptionally well. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively in lessons. This was very evident in a lively English lesson in which Years 5 and 6 pupils added a spoken soundtrack to a short film. The pupils engaged in an excellent exchange of views on the intentions and feelings of characters in the animation. Pupils are given positive encouragement to learn well through praise and teachers' marking. This is supportive and informative but does not always refer back to pupils' targets and lesson objectives and so help them to know what they must do to improve. The monitoring of teaching by senior staff is effective in supporting staff, for example in improving the quality of teaching in science. There

is effective support from a part-time teacher and teaching assistants who contribute well to specialist areas such as music and to the work of small groups of less able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The international dimension of the curriculum stimulates the pupils' learning exceptionally well and includes learning French and, during the current school year, Spanish. Further strengths are the performing and visual arts and pupils have much to say about the many workshops, dance and drama events and musical performances they have enjoyed. The high quality outcomes are clearly evident in displays and photograph albums and a compact disc of songs featured in a variety of concerts and productions over the year. Provision in music includes the learning of instruments by more than half the school roll. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and imaginative play features prominently, promoting children's language and communication skills very well. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned and contributes to pupils' awareness of personal safety and a healthy and fit lifestyle. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, with detailed targets for pupils to achieve in their individual education plans. There is an excellent range of activities outside lessons for pupils to enjoy, as well as residential trips and opportunities for school teams to participate successfully in tournaments.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school promotes the well-being of all pupils exceptionally well. The school's 'family' atmosphere encourages pupils to feel safe and very happy. All aspects of health, safety, child protection and safe recruitment of staff are in place. There are good arrangements for the transition of children into school, then from the Reception class and into Year 1, as well as for pupils going on to high schools. The school has a number of very effective links with parents, who have overwhelmingly positive views of the school. They particularly appreciate how staff 'go the extra mile' for the children. Parents comment that, 'the door is always open' and they can 'talk to any of the staff about any worries whatsoever'. Procedures to track the progress of pupils are used very effectively to identify good achievement, under-achievement and gaps in learning, so that improvement strategies can be put in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new leadership team is establishing clear direction for the school. There is a shared vision for how the school is to develop and a strong commitment to doing the very best for all children and to promoting the school's role in the local parish and community. The school's process of self-evaluation is robust and is based on good monitoring of lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work by the headteacher and officers of the local authority. Particularly effective are the school's partnerships with a network of schools locally, external agencies and schools overseas, all of which have had a big impact on the quality of the curriculum. Governors support and challenge the school well and there is good leadership by the experienced chairperson. There are several new members and some have training needs, which are being addressed. A number of governors make a good contribution on a daily basis to the life of the school and help to promote good community links.

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Annex A

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?	1

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?	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	1
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

Inspection of Capenhurst Church of England Primary school, Capenhurst, CH1 6HE

I would like to thank you very much for your help when I inspected your school. I enjoyed my visit very much. Now I would like to share with you my thoughts about your school.

Yours is a good school with some outstanding features, for instance:

- the staff take excellent care of you all and teach you well
- your behaviour and attitudes to lessons are excellent and it is clear that you enjoy school very much
- you are doing well in English and mathematics
- the staff make your learning exciting and interesting, for instance in planning trips and special events in music and art, using the interactive whiteboards very effectively in lessons and teaching you about other languages and cultures
- the staff provide you with excellent opportunities to take on responsibilities in school and to enjoy activities at playtimes, lunchtimes, after school and on residential trips.

To make things even better, the teachers need to help you to do better in science and to mark your work so that you understand what you need to do to improve it. Your job in this is to read the teachers' comments carefully and act on them.

Please work hard and carry on enjoying school.