

J H Godwin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110983
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310471
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Martin

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	
School	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janette Trenholm
Headteacher	Mr Conrad North
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Melbourne Road Blacon Chester Cheshire CH1 5JG
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is in a community that is among those that have the highest levels of social and economic deprivation nationally. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average, but a much higher proportion than that found nationally has a statement of special educational need. A unit, within the school, is provided for pupils with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). National awards achieved include Investors in People in 2005 and the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and National Healthy Schools award in 2007. The school also holds an Activemark Gold award for its sport and health promotion, a Football Association Charter Mark for encouraging soccer skills and a bronze Eco Schools award for furthering environmental awareness.

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. Inspection findings agree with all aspects of the school's own evaluation. The good care it gives pupils makes a difference to the quality of their lives and opportunities. Exceptionally good care for pupils with particular social and/or emotional needs, including those in the BESD unit, enables them to be fully included in learning. The school sets all pupils realistic but challenging expectations to give them good aspirations. Evaluation of the school's work is outstanding. Strong leadership by the headteacher, alongside good leadership by key staff, gives the school a climate for learning that encourages success and gives the school a good capacity to improve.

Outstanding partnerships with other local schools and the wider community make a very significant impact on the school's improvement. For example, the work to promote better reading skills with the Blacon Educational Village (BEV) family of schools shares expertise widely. Parents acknowledge the recent improvements made with comments like, 'I am very pleased with the progress my child makes at J H Godwin.' Pupils make good progress because they are taught well. Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. Inspection findings confirm that the school rightly expects to meet its own challenging targets for Year 6 this year, showing that the weaker teaching that caused the drop in standards seen in the 2007 tests has been eradicated and that this drop was not the start of a trend.

Pupils are happy and enjoy school. Parents' views are neatly summed up by one who says, 'My child finds school fun and looks forward to attending every day.' Pupils behave well. They keep to the school's rules, showing maturity in their understanding of how these rules help their school to be safe and secure. The good relationships they have with each other and with the staff enhance their personal development. The school makes careful checks on attendance, which is average, taking strong action to ensure that pupils attend as they should. Pupils know that bullying is wrong. They have a good understanding of how to deal with it if it should occur. The school has particularly good systems with which to identify and minimise conflict between pupils. Pupils in Year 6 say they feel well prepared for moving to their high schools, both academically and socially. Effective systems ensure that pupils are protected from risks and safeguarded. They have a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe.

Pupils benefit from good opportunities for learning on a broad front. They take part eagerly in sport, music and the arts, for example. They develop important key skills for their future well-being from good provision of the statutory curriculum. However, their limited range of reading interests and poor vocabulary hinders their progress in reading and writing. Pupils' reading is not developed well enough across the curriculum. Steps taken by the school to extend opportunities for reading and widen vocabulary have not yet had sufficient impact. Nevertheless, the school provides good value for money. Improvement since the last inspection has been considerable. Pupils' learning in information and communication technology, for example, has improved a great deal and is now good. The active governing body now uses its improved knowledge of the school to support and challenge it well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are pleased that their children settle quickly and happily into the Reception class. On entry the children's abilities, on average, are well below what is expected nationally. For example, many children find it difficult to express themselves clearly and have little general knowledge. Good leadership ensures that children progress well. They enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor activities, enjoying the challenge they provide. Warm relationships and the nurturing environment provide safety and security, promoting positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. The children quickly learn to cooperate with each other and with the adults who support them. Despite effective teaching which leads to good progress, the children still have a lot of ground to make up in reading, writing, shape, space and measure, and calculations. A good range of activities, during which their learning is closely observed and assessed, ensures that children make good progress in all of the areas of learning. By the end of Reception standards are below expected levels. Most children are still working towards the early learning goals. Nevertheless, good teaching ensures that those who are able, do reach or even exceed these goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Extend pupils' reading interests as widely as possible to raise standards in reading and writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because they are well supported by good teaching. Good progress throughout the school is typified by that in Years 1 and 2 where, for example, pupils' improving knowledge of letter sounds helps them with their reading and writing. Moreover, good progress in Years 3 to 6 builds effectively on previous good teaching. Standards in science are broadly average and the school has been particularly successful in getting pupils to the higher level. Mathematics and English standards are below average. Pupils find it difficult to write in a way that engages their audience because their vocabularies are quite limited and their range of reading is narrow. Targets in 2007 were all met and suitably challenging ones are set for all year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those from the BESD unit, progress well because they are well supported by skilled and well managed teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils' positive views reflect their good attitudes in comments such as, 'J H Godwin is more than just a school; it is a place where I feel safe, surrounded by great friends.' Pupils are polite and friendly with each other and confident when talking to adults. Willingness to learn and good relationships with their teachers help them to achieve well. Attendance is satisfactory and largely reflects these attitudes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strong sense of moral and social responsibility enables pupils to contribute well to the life of the school. Younger pupils value the care that Year 5 and 6 'buddies' give them at playtimes. Trustworthy pupils contribute well to the safety and well-being of their school community, taking responsibilities seriously, for example as road safety, fire safety and recycling officers. Fund-raising for charities and a

campaign to plant trees in Blacon Park give them wider social responsibilities. Representatives of the school council make important decisions that help their school to improve, including working together to achieve the bronze Eco Schools award that benefits the environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning because lessons are interesting and are not disturbed by any poor behaviour. Teachers reward good behaviour effectively, promoting positive attitudes. They present lessons in a stimulating way which builds well on what pupils already know. New technology is used well by both staff and pupils to make learning interesting and fun. Teachers alert pupils to what they will learn at the start of the lesson and pupils are becoming more adept at evaluating at the end how well they have learned. Pupils respond well to teachers' questions. Opportunities to explain their method or thinking, and thus enhance their understanding and vocabulary, are developing. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils during group work, but their impact during introductions is more variable and depends on how well the teacher has directed them. Teachers devise tasks which meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, so ensuring that all pupils achieve well. Some pupils from the BESD unit are taught in the main school. They continue to learn very well in this situation because they have been well prepared for the experience beforehand and because the teachers and other pupils support them well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Recent changes to the curriculum are beginning to enhance pupils' skills in literacy. For example, the 'Letters and Sounds' programme is improving skills in reading and 'shoulder partners' allows pupils to discuss their thoughts before answering questions. However, programmes to extend pupils' reading habits and develop their powers of speech are at too early a stage of implementation to have had much of an effect. A good range of educational visits and visitors give pupils valuable first-hand experiences, broadening their understanding of the world around them. Their learning is further enriched by extensive music provision, the teaching of French and Spanish and exciting theme weeks. Pupils eagerly take up the many opportunities to exercise offered to them in high quality physical education sessions and the extensive extra-curricular sports programme. The provision for gifted and talented pupils, outside of music, sports and writing, is in the early stages of development. The residential visits are keenly anticipated. They promote team building and social skills well, in addition to allowing pupils to experience sailing and other water-based activities under safe conditions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Academic guidance is satisfactory, but improving. Pupils are increasingly aware of their individual targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, adding value to their learning. They benefit from exceptionally supportive pastoral care and guidance. Outstanding care for their social and emotional needs gives them security in school, aiding their learning and enabling them to make good progress. The headteacher and staff know all pupils and their families well. Positive relationships between parents, pupils and staff help to create a happy, friendly

environment. Procedures to safeguard pupils follow latest government guidelines and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils feel safe and well supervised, with risk assessments conducted whenever needed. Good provision for personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' understanding of their own personal development, relationships and well-being. Arrangements for settling new pupils into school, and for transfer to secondary school, are good, aided by valuable cooperation with the on-site pre-school and adjacent high school. The school works very effectively in partnership with parents and other agencies to support pupils who have particular needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership and management drive the school's improvement. Good support comes from the team of key staff but, as some have only recently been appointed, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of their work. Good relationships and communication among staff promote a favourable learning climate that fosters pupils' well-being and raises their attainment. Robust management procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning accurately identify the school's strengths and prioritise actions for improvement. Steps towards such improvements are shared with governors through regular audits and reports, enabling them to evaluate progress. Governance is good and much improved since the last inspection. The chair of governors speaks with pride of the improvements under the current leadership. Governors' links with classes, together with visits they make, especially for celebrations and events, help them to make careful checks on the day-to-day running of the school. Their supportive but challenging contribution ensures that the school's good capacity to improve is sustained.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

The inspectors really enjoyed visiting your school. We were impressed by the calm, orderly way in which everyone in the school goes about their work. We also noticed how you get the school day off to a good start when you arrive and settle to learning quickly and enthusiastically. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me, particularly the school council. I agree with you and your parents who quite rightly feel that J H Godwin is a good school. These are the main things we found.

- You make good progress and achieve well.
- Your headteacher is determined that every one of you should have the chance to do as well as you can.
- It was very pleasing to see how well you behave and how well you get along together. It is clear that you respect the caring adults who look after you so well.
- The teachers encourage you to do well and you try hard with your learning.
- You told us that you really enjoy school. We saw that this is because you have good learning activities and learn happily with and from each other.
- You understand well how to live healthily and safely and you contribute enthusiastically to your school and community.

To help the school to become even better I have asked your teachers to:

- help you to improve your skills of speaking and listening
- help you to read a wider variety of books.

Thank you once again for all your help and best wishes for the future.