

# The Berkeley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111122
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310508
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	354
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robin Christian
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Stainsby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 April 2005
<b>School address</b>	Laidon Avenue Wistaston Crewe Cheshire CW2 6RU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01240 685144
<b>Fax number</b>	01270 651492

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; standards reached by pupils and the progress they make; the quality of teaching and learning; the leadership and management of the school; aspects of care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from national published data and the school's assessment data; observations of lessons; discussions with staff, governors and pupils; parents' questionnaires. Relevant school documents, including pupils' work, were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in the self-evaluation were not justified. These have been included in the report where appropriate.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. Almost all pupils who attend are White British. None of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very small compared with most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Inclusion Quality Mark, Activemark and Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher was appointed in January 2008.

## 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 its pupils. Good leadership and management have brought about positive outcomes in pupils' good achievement and outstanding personal development. Pupils enjoy school immensely because of the rich curriculum with its exceptional range of clubs, residential visits and specially planned activities during and outside of lesson time. Attendance is well above average and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are fully aware of what it means to maintain a healthy lifestyle and they appreciate the healthy choices of meals and snacks offered in school. Pupils develop important life skills very well by taking on responsibilities for such things as recycling, road safety or representing others at school council meetings. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They understand and respect different cultures, and show deeply caring attitudes towards each other. Older pupils help to make playtimes safe by being 'buddies' to ensure that everyone has a friend. Others share their skills with younger children by helping them with their work. By the time pupils leave the Berkeley they are confident, self-assured young people who are exceptionally well prepared to tackle the next stages in their education.

Pupils' achievement is good. From entering Year 1, with many achieving and some exceeding the expected skills for their age, they progress well and consistently reach above average standards overall by the end of Year 6. The unexpected dip to average in science results in 2007 prompted an immediate and effective response from the school. Pupils' progress is now assessed and tracked with increased rigour, following a thorough analysis of their performance to identify gaps in their understanding. As a result, school data shows that the school is on track to meet its challenging targets in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are also making good progress in Years 1 and 2. There has been an extended period of unsettled teaching in Key Stage 1 which was a factor in the untypical drop in standards at the end of Year 2, in 2007. Standards in reading and writing fell to average and mathematics was below average. Significantly fewer than expected achieved above the nationally expected average Level 2 in writing and mathematics. Leaders recognise that monitoring in Key Stage 1 at the time was not rigorous enough so intervention to boost pupils' skills was too slow. Nevertheless, following the national tests and assessment results they acted swiftly and effectively to remedy the situation. New systems for closer and more accurate assessment of pupils' needs have been introduced. This enables more effective target setting. As a result pupils, especially the more able, are challenged realistically and achievement and standards are improving. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Additional teaching support in Year 3 and new measures to provide extra support at an earlier stage in Key Stage 1 are having a good impact on pupils' progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and accounts for pupils making good progress. The unsettled teaching in Key Stage 1 has been resolved. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and promote their personal development exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils' self-esteem is high. They feel valued so they are eager to try hard to succeed. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to challenge pupils. For example, in one lesson pupils tested their mathematical skills in a purposeful way by solving geographical problems. Interactive whiteboards are used well to help bring a lively pace to lessons. A mathematics lesson became more fun for pupils when they had the chance to add the rows of coins displayed by pressing the different 'buttons' on the whiteboard. They quickly learned to recognise the value of the coins and to understand how the decimal system works. Occasionally, teachers do not take

enough account of pupils' varying abilities within the class. This leads to work which is too challenging for some groups so they are unable to progress in those lessons as well as they should. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They know the pupils well and understand their particular needs. Teachers mark pupils' work well, giving them clear guidance about how it can be improved.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher has brought a clear, objective vision with regard to building on the tradition of good achievement and moving the school forward. This has been shared successfully with senior leaders and governors. However, leaders are aware that this has yet to be communicated to parents, who understandably express some uncertainty about their role in the school's future as they are not fully informed. The headteacher is supported well by senior staff. The deputy headteacher has maintained the momentum of improvements by implementing new systems for monitoring pupils' progress and reaffirming achievement and standards during the period of transition. Senior leaders play a crucial role in teachers' performance management and in evaluating the overall work of the school. They contribute effectively to the school's accurate self-evaluation. The provision of good quality care has been maintained. Pupils feel safe in school and safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure that this is so. Governors are active in the life of the school. They support and challenge the school well, and manage finances effectively to ensure good value for money. The school has good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage; consequently, they make good progress. Their abilities are broadly typical for their age when they first start in Reception, though their early writing skills are not as well developed. When children enter Year 1 most have achieved well to attain the targets expected nationally in all areas of learning and a few children exceed them. Good quality leadership ensures that teachers provide a good range of stimulating activities which help children to make choices and grow in confidence. However, opportunities to link outdoor investigative play purposefully to other areas of learning are hampered by the limitations of the outside classroom space. Personal, social and emotional development has a high priority. Children's introduction to Reception is managed well through good links with the on-site pre-school providers. Parents fully appreciate the 'open door' policy which gives them access to Foundation Stage staff throughout the year. Children settle happily, enjoy their learning and behave exceptionally well. Day-to-day assessment of children's progress is managed well but a more strategic use of assessment information to set future targets is at a developmental stage.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Increase opportunities for parents and carers to share their views about the school.

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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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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



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

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently may I thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you about your school and we were extremely impressed by your politeness, your good manners and your excellent behaviour. We were also delighted to find that your attendance is excellent. Keep that up because it is very important. You certainly know how to stay healthy and fit so that you can enjoy the exciting clubs and other out-of-school activities provided for you.

You have a good school. You make good progress and reach above average standards. You told us that your teachers are 'very enthusiastic and make lessons fun' and we fully agree with that. The grown-ups in school take good care of you and you take good care of each other.

Naturally, everyone would like to see your school become even better so we discussed this with your headteacher, who has some great ideas, and your governors. First, we decided that children in Reception could get off to an even better start if they had a super outside area where they could develop more of their skills. Secondly, we have asked school leaders to think of more ways for parents to put forward their views about your school so they can have a better say in its future.