

Little Bollington CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111251
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310542
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon N Rogers
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Johnstone
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2003
School address	Lymm Road Little Bollington Nr Altrincham Cheshire WA14 4SZ
Telephone number	01565 830344
Fax number	01565 830857

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Inspection number	310542

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether all pupils are achieving as well as they can, the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, lesson observations and pupils' books. Discussions were held with staff, pupils, parents, the school improvement partner and governors. Parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, apart from care, guidance and support which was judged good rather than outstanding. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a very small school. Many pupils travel to the school from a wide area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. More than twice the national average of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The very great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. In recent years, there has been disruption to staffing and, earlier this year, there was a successful campaign against closure proposals. A significant number of pupils enter the school later than in Reception, particularly in the older classes. The school holds the Activemark, Investors In People status, Basic Skills Quality Mark and the School Curriculum award.

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 that is very much at the heart of the local community. Pupils have a real voice in helping shape their school and consequently feel valued and respected. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Typical comments praised the headteacher's leadership and said how parents are welcome partners in their children's education. Many said that they are pleased with their child's progress and that their children are very happy. 'My child positively skips to school' is typical of the parents' comments. Parents appreciate the small size of the school and feel it provides excellent pastoral care in a warm, friendly atmosphere. The strong commitment to include all pupils equally has earned the school a good reputation for providing well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An increasing number have complex special needs; all are welcomed and quickly become valued members of the school community.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Careful tracking of individual progress shows pupils make good progress in relation to their individual capabilities and starting points. They build on their learning and skills and continue to progress well through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good and often very good progress because their particular needs are very well catered for.

By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are broadly average. In such a small school, year groups vary greatly in size and in the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In addition, a significant number of pupils enter later than at the usual starting time, so the group of pupils that leaves the school may be very different from the group that entered Reception. These factors all impact on standards. In 2007, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 dipped a little below the national average, particularly in writing, due to a very broad spread of ability in the small year group. In Key Stage 2 in 2007, unvalidated results in national tests showed that standards were broadly average. Pupils narrowly missed their targets at the nationally expected level in English and mathematics, and few reached the higher level. The year group changed significantly after the targets were set. In English, very nearly all pupils reached the expected level in reading but less than half reached the expected level in writing. In science, all pupils reached the expected level and almost half attained the higher level, which indicates some very good achievement by those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work seen in lessons, pupils' books and tracking information shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to meet challenging targets in 2008.

Pupils clearly enjoy school and feel safe there. They behave well and say staff listen if they have a problem and act quickly to sort it out. Pupils talk knowledgeably about eating healthily and enjoy sports and physical activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils discuss and reflect on feelings and making the right choices in assemblies and personal, social and health lessons. They show a high level of care and concern for others, especially towards younger ones. They raised money to send a cow to Africa, and love taking part in performances and services in church. All pupils from Reception onwards have the chance to take part in residential visits. Older pupils relish their roles as reading partners for the younger ones, and many contribute as recycling officers or monitors. Suitable literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal and social skills, along with visits to work places, such as the airport, equip them well for future economic well-being. Attendance is average.

Teaching is good, and pupils said, 'Teachers make all the work fun.' Lessons are well planned so learning builds progressively. Work is closely matched to individual needs so that children of different ages and abilities in each class are all challenged. Skilled teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to learning and well-being, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work is marked thoroughly but teachers do not often include comments telling pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Good systems track and monitor individual progress closely so that staff know just where to intervene with extra help and support. There are well developed procedures for target setting and review, but pupils are sometimes uncertain about their targets and how to meet them. The school is taking steps to improve these procedures. Pastoral care is excellent; staff know pupils and their families well and this contributes strongly to their progress and enjoyment of school. Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements.

The good curriculum is suitably adapted to meet the needs of each individual and includes a good programme of personal, social and health education. An excellent range of activities, including many visits, enriches the curriculum and makes a very strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The school is working to link subjects to make learning even more purposeful. For example, French lessons in Years 2 and 3 include history, literacy, geography and ICT. The majority of pupils eagerly participate in the wide range of out-of-school activities. Good links with local schools further broaden pupils' experiences.

The headteacher's good leadership has successfully built a strong team of staff and governors, all strongly committed to school improvement. Self-evaluation is generally accurate. The issue from the previous inspection has been fully addressed and recent disruption to staffing managed well. The school makes full use of all external agencies and links with other local schools to support learning and pupils' well-being. Value for money is good and careful budget management supports plans for improvement, staffing levels and to enhance the building. Staff performance management relates to areas for development. Good governance brings a variety of skills to challenge and hold the school to account while providing strong support. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the Foundation Stage are broadly typical for their age.

They get off to a good start and make good progress. Children feel safe and secure in the warm, welcoming atmosphere where they are very well cared for. They become increasingly confident, work happily together and quickly learn to follow the simple routines. Good teaching provides a varied range of learning activities in class. Some activities take place outside but this area is not used enough to extend the curriculum out of doors in all areas of learning. By the time they move to Year 1, the very great majority of the pupils reach, and some exceed, the expected levels for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Ensure that Foundation Stage children have regular planned opportunities for outdoor learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 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	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

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

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school.

You were all very friendly, polite and helpful so I really enjoyed my day with you. It was really good to see how well you care for each other, and your parents must be proud of your good manners!

I could see how happy you are at school and you told me many things that you really enjoy, including taking part in events and the school fair. You think your lessons are fun. You are lucky to go on so many trips and I know how much you enjoy the residential visits.

I thought you would like to know what I found.

- Little Bollington is a good school with a good headteacher, staff and governors who work hard together to improve your school.
- You told me you like all your teachers; they are good teachers who make sure you have lots of interesting work and good activities.
- You make good progress and reach the same standards as in most schools.
- You do well in science but you should do better in writing.
- You know what you have to do to be fit and healthy.
- The staff take very good care of you and carefully track how you are doing with your work to make sure you do as well as you can.

I have suggested two things to make your school an even better place to learn.

- Raise standards in your writing.
- Make sure the Reception children use the outdoor area regularly to learn outside.

You can help by always working hard and by continuing to be helpful and enjoying everything you do at school.