

# St Chad's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111262
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310546
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Welch

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Adam Friend
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Cross
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gladstone Street Winsford Cheshire CW7 4AT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 593345
<b>Fax number</b>	01606 862843

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. It serves a semi-rural area that has significant pockets of social and economic need. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is similar to that nationally. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below the national average. The school has achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark and 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: 3

St Chad's is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of its work are good including the provision in the Foundation Stage and pupils' personal development and well-being. It provides pupils with a very caring and friendly environment in which to learn. Parents are supportive of the school and are appreciative of the interesting and stimulating experiences provided for their children. A typical parental comment was 'I wish I was a child again and at St Chad's school.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They start school with skills that are below those typical for their age and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This progress is maintained in Key Stage 1, and by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average or above. However, in Key Stage 2 pupils have not always done as well as they should and in 2007 standards in English, mathematics and science fell to well below the national average. Several factors contributed to this decline in standards. These included a larger than usual number of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, a period of instability due to staffing difficulties and the loss of a significant minority of more-able pupils who left the school between Years 2 and 6. The picture is improving and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. This is because teaching is satisfactory and some lessons are good. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons when teachers provide challenge and make clear their high expectations. Pupils respond well to this, and apply themselves enthusiastically showing good and, at times, excellent behaviour. Planning is not always based on meeting the needs of different groups of pupils and some higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough. Targets are set but are not specific enough to individual pupils.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good. Pupils feel safe in school, secure in the knowledge that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly. They appreciate the work of the 'Playtime Pals' in Years 5 and 6 and say that this has helped to make playtimes particularly enjoyable occasions. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They enjoy the fruit snacks provided by the school and are active at breaks and lunchtimes, making good use of the equipment provided. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The ethos is well suited to enabling pupils to flourish, respect others and be respected in turn.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched well through visits, including residential ones, and visitors and extended school activities. While there is an endeavour to provide a curriculum that caters for pupils' interests, with examples seen of their work in aspects of history and geography, it is not always providing sufficiently for pupils' needs and potential in the core subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher is firmly committed to the success of the school and its community and has the expertise to bring out the best in adults and pupils. She provides clear direction for the school and has forged a strong sense of teamwork. She is understandably keen to ensure that decision making is shared more widely and that subject leaders are more accountable for performance in their areas of responsibilities. The governing body has developed a better understanding of its role since the previous inspection. It is more informed about standards and achievement and so is better enabled to hold the school to account.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good liaison between the school, parents and the on-site pre-school group results in a positive start to school life. Creative and interesting activities, which take account of children's different needs, make learning fun. Teaching is good with a lively approach that keeps children motivated and eager to learn. This ensures that they make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. There is a good balance between activities that are led by adults and those that children chose. The outdoor area is attractive but there is not enough adult intervention to take children's learning forward and to extend their skills. Adults have high expectations, provide clear routines and enable children to build positive relationships. Children enjoy taking on responsibilities, acting in a mature and sensible way as they escort younger children back to the pre-school group. Good leadership and management ensure effective teamwork among the staff. Parents are happy with their children's progress, a typical comment being 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds and is safe and well looked after.'

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Increase middle managers' responsibilities for provision in their areas, including the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, in order to improve pupils' achievement.
- Ensure that all teaching is consistently challenging to reflect the best practice that already exists in the school.

A small proportion of schools whose overall performance is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and most are achieving the expected early learning goals with a significant minority beyond that by the start of Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 fluctuate between matching the national average and being above it. Standards in Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science have fallen in recent years and some pupils did not do as well as expected. Improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, the way the school assesses and tracks pupils' progress and good quality intervention strategies have halted the decline in standards; so much so that achievement is now satisfactory and most pupils in the current Year 6 class are back on track to reach their end of Key Stage 2 targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils because of the effective support they receive in class and in small groups.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning show that they enjoy school. There is a strong sense of community harmony in the school. One pupil commented, 'Everyone in school works well, staff and children keep it all together.' Pupils have a good sense of what is right and wrong. This is reinforced well by all staff and the strong and trusting relationships between adults and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' well-being. Pupils look forward to the rewards for good

behaviour and effort, like Golden Time, offered by teachers. Social skills are developed very well in lessons and during visits including residential ones. Pupils say this helps them to become good team members. The school council helps promote pupils' views and has put forward its ideas about introducing cycle racks.

Although attendance is similar to national levels, it is not as high as at the time of the last inspection. It is adversely affected by the poor attendance of a few families. The school is doing a great deal to encourage these pupils to attend.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Planning of lessons varies. The planning identifies the needs of different groups of pupils and the strategies to be used to address them. For other lessons planning is brief and does not always take into account pupils' previous learning. In most lessons pupils are managed well but in a minority they become overexcited and this impacts on the learning of others. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to ensure the full attention of pupils, who are also involved in their use. For example, pupils in Year 6 in a mathematics lesson used the board competently to share their knowledge of capacity with their class mates. Teachers' marking is overall satisfactory but inconsistent. It is generally supportive but not all marking shows pupils how to improve. Good examples were seen in English where high quality marking refers to learning objectives and guides pupils to the next stage of their learning. Teaching assistants support teachers effectively and are well briefed so that pupils in small groups benefit from this. Sometimes, in whole class sessions, their role has insufficient focus.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is being developed to match the range of pupils' needs. There is a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills which is making a difference to pupils' learning but has not yet demonstrated sustained benefits over time. Monitoring of how pupils respond to the curriculum is not in place as a rigorous exercise in all years and all subjects. Information and communication technology is used as an effective support for other subjects, resulting in good examples of subject links. Pupils in Year 5 made notes as they used a website to find out about the Ancient Greeks. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and helps pupils to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. Older pupils say that it helps them to become aware of their rights and responsibilities. Pupils appreciate the after-school clubs and other events that make school fun. Visits and visitors make the curriculum more interesting and give pupils an insight into the world beyond school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are well cared for and parents agree that their children are in safe hands. Pupils feel secure in the knowledge that they can rely on adults to look after them. Child protection procedures and assessments of risks to health and safety are in place. Safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. The school works well with parents as well as a variety of external agencies to support all pupils, including those most at risk. Extra support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is provided at an early stage. Systems for tracking

pupils' achievements are improving although assessment on a day to day level in terms of teachers' marking and setting targets for pupils is still underdeveloped. Some pupils are not clear as to exactly what they need to do to reach the next level.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

In a short period of time the headteacher has established a clear vision for the school and has sharpened improvement priorities. These are shared and understood by staff and governors. Her impact has been instrumental in raising standards and achievement in Key Stage 2 after a decline in recent years. Difficult decisions have had to be made to improve the quality of teaching and learning and deal with staff absence. New appointments to the teaching staff in upper Key Stage 2 have already seen an increase in the rate of pupils' progress.

The school development plan, formulated by the new senior leadership team, has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. There has been some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom although not on a regular basis in recent times. The role of leaders other than the headteacher is still at the early stages of development. The governors are supportive of the school and the recently appointed chair of governors is working closely with the headteacher and becoming more involved in the day-to-day running of 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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and the many interesting things that happen at school. We could tell that you really enjoyed the residential visits you go on and taking part in activities with other schools. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us.

Overall, we judged your school to be satisfactory and we identified some things that were good.

- You are polite, courteous and well behaved and looked after us very well at lunchtimes.
- You use the outside play areas well to keep fit and you are very knowledgeable about healthy foods and the importance of a balanced diet.
- The staff take good care of you and you know how to stay safe.

We have asked the governors, the headteacher and the rest of the staff to do the following things to improve your school.

- Help you to achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ask the leaders of each subject to check how well you are doing in their particular area.
- Ask teachers to give you work that is not too hard or too easy and helps you to learn more quickly.

You can play your part by always working hard and doing your best.

We wish you all the best for the future.