

Sir John Offley CofE (VC) Primary School
Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124289
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314876
Inspection dates	29 February –3 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Baines
Headteacher	Sally-Anne Ward-Scott
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Izaak Walton Way Madeley Crewe CW3 9PJ
Telephone number	01782 750301
Fax number	01782 752127

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school and the attainment of most children on entry to the Nursery class is just below the level expected for their age. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Over the last two years, there has been a considerable amount of staffing instability due to maternity leaves, staff absence and a teacher redundancy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils attain standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Though pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent between classes and results in some pupils making better progress than others. The main reason for this is that information about pupils' progress is not always used successfully by some teachers to set work that is sufficiently challenging. This is particularly the case for pupils who are more able. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well targeted extra support and so make the same progress as other pupils.

Most parents are supportive of the school and pleased with the learning experiences provided for their children. They also appreciate the way their children are cared for while in school, as the following parental comment shows: 'The school is a warm and loving place and I am glad all my children attend here.'

The headteacher provides the school with a clear vision and focused direction for improvement. All involved in the life of the school share this vision and a strong team ethos is evident. The role of some subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in their subjects is not sufficiently developed. Consequently, they do not play a full part in helping the school improve further. Nonetheless, leaders have brought about satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and show satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Pupils behave well. They are polite, kind and considerate to others. This has a beneficial effect on relationships throughout the school and is reflected in the calm and friendly atmosphere evident in all classrooms. Pupils say they are pleased with the way the curriculum has been improved recently by the provision of more out of school activities for them to take part in. They also say they really enjoy the opportunity they now have to learn French. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to refine and improve their skills in using information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects.

The pastoral support and care of pupils is strong with all staff being firmly committed to the health and well-being of all pupils. This is a major factor in the pupils' good all-round personal development. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are thorough and all staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have a concern about an individual pupil. This is reflected in the way pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school and are confident in talking to a member of staff if they have any worries.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory. Staff are aware of the needs of children of this age and are able to help them quickly settle in when they first start school. Relationships are good and lead to classrooms being friendly and happy places in which to learn. Staff provide a variety of interesting activities and encourage children to make choices for themselves as to the order in which they do them. At times, these activities do not provide sufficient challenge for them to make the progress of which they are capable, especially those who are more able. By the time they enter Year 1 children have made satisfactory progress across all the areas of learning and are working at the skill levels expected of them. Children enjoy their activities, behave well and collaborate well in pairs and small groups. There are close links with parents who are kept fully informed about the progress their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of data on pupils' progress to set more challenging work, especially for the more capable pupils.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation role of those subject leaders who are not yet fully involved in promoting school improvement.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills to support their learning in other subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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

By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement from their starting points on entering school. Attainment in English is relatively stronger than in mathematics and science because of the recent whole school emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' calculation skills in mathematics. To this end, planning has been recently improved to ensure these skills are now taught more effectively through the school.

Progress differs between different groups of pupils. The performance of girls has been better than boys in all three subjects throughout the school. A number of initiatives have been put into place to improve the progress that boys make. However, it is too early to measure the impact that these initiatives are having. The pupils capable of higher attainment do not achieve as much as they should because they are not given sufficiently challenging work to do.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance rates. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They behave well and are thoughtful and caring in their dealings with others. Pupils are happy to take on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. They take their duties seriously, carry them out diligently and so make a good positive contribution to the school community. They also contribute well to the village community such as by attending the Madeley Conservation Group and performing their May Pole dancing. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well and they talk enthusiastically about the need to eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise. They know how to stay safe, as is shown in the way they move responsibly around school and on the playground. Pupils are developing basic skills soundly and are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning, which has a beneficial effect on the progress they make. As one pupil commented, 'Our teachers make lessons fun.' Teachers explain activities carefully to pupils so they are clear about what they are to learn and how to

set about their work. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their ideas in pairs and small groups. This was seen to good effect when pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson were working together to estimate and then measure a variety of objects. There are times when the work given to pupils does not sufficiently stretch them, and this particularly holds back the achievement of the more able pupils in some classes. Marking is not used consistently between classes to guide pupils toward improving their performance. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably extended by a variety of enrichment activities, including out of school clubs and educational visits. Pupils also have opportunities to work with a range of visitors, such as a professional artist, to further develop their skills. There is a good programme for personal and social development and this has been recognised by the award of Healthy School status. The school has also gained the Activemark Award for its provision in physical education. Close links with the local church make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. There are few opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills to enable them to enhance their work in other subjects. The curriculum has been modified recently to try to improve the performance of boys, who have been making slower progress than girls. This has included the provision of more practical problem solving activities to engage them more in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The strong pastoral care and support for pupils underpin their good personal development. All staff are committed to ensuring pupils are safe and secure whilst in their care. Arrangements for child protection are thorough and risk assessments are carefully applied for activities in and around school and on school visits. There are good links with other agencies to provide extra support for individual pupils when required. Pupils are given clear guidance on how to stay safe in their everyday lives. The procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils have recently been improved and these are now thorough. However, the information gained is not used consistently to plan work for pupils that is sufficiently challenging. The school's guidance to pupils on how to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve is still at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has enabled it to identify and prioritise areas for development. For instance, over the last 18 months there has been a focus on improving pupils' skills in writing. This has proved successful and standards in this aspect of English have risen. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning have been made more rigorous. As a result, teachers are now more accountable for the progress that their pupils make. Performance management is satisfactory, with clear links between staff's own professional development and whole school priorities. A significant minority of parents expressed concerns about the way the teacher redundancy was managed and the possible unfavourable effects on pupils' progress of a period of staffing instability. Evidence clearly shows that leaders

of the school worked closely with the local authority to ensure that the redundancy procedures were carried out correctly and in a professional manner. It also verifies that instability in staffing has been managed carefully to ensure pupils' progress has not been adversely affected.

The school recognises that some subject leaders are not as proactive as they could be in bringing about improvement. Governors give satisfactory support to the school and are developing their role in asking relevant questions of leaders about its performance.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2
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

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?	3
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	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

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

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a satisfactory school that helps you make satisfactory progress. This helps you to reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are average by the end of Year 6. Your parents are pleased with the way the school looks after you.

What we liked most about your school:

- All adults take good care of you and make sure you are safe while in school.
- You behave well and are kind and considerate to others.
- You are adopting healthy lifestyles.
- You make a good contribution to the life of the school and the village.
- You really enjoy coming to school and work hard.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good and help make the school a friendly place in which to work and play.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to help the school improve further.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that all of you are given work that will allow you to learn faster.
- Help all leaders of subjects to be fully involved in bringing about improvement.
- Give you more opportunities to use your information and communication technology skills to support learning in other subjects.

We hope you continue to behave well and carry on enjoying your learning.

All my best wishes for the future.



4 March 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sir John Offley CofE (VC) Primary School, Madeley,
Cheshire CW3 9PJ**

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Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector