

Wistaston Church Lane Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135138
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	319613
Inspection dates	10–11 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carole Atkinson
Headteacher	Mr Graham Prince
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Wistaston Crewe Cheshire CW2 8EZ
Telephone number	01270 567769
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school was formed in September 2007 as a result of the amalgamation of adjacent infants and junior schools. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. The headteacher, appointed in September 2007, was formerly head of the junior school that was part of the amalgamation.

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 with outstanding features. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school immensely because days are packed with interesting activities. Attendance is well above average. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school's aim to promote 'care, courtesy, calmness and confidence' is evident in every aspect of pupils' conduct around the school. As a result, relationships are outstanding and pupils feel safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are well aware of a very wide range of religions and festivals celebrated in different countries, including some European cultures, and have a very mature understanding about life in a multicultural society. They are fully aware of the importance of keeping to a sensible diet and taking lots of exercise. After-school sports clubs are extremely well attended, as is the daily Golden Mile run. The Phys-Kids, a group of trained Year 6 pupils who organise playground activities, ensure that younger pupils are very active during break times. Pupils contribute enormously to the everyday life of the school. The school council gives everyone the opportunity to share ideas. Responsibility for time-keeping, office duty or organising and running charity stalls provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need both to support their future well-being, and as members of an extremely caring school community.

Teachers' knowledge of the pupils and the speed at which a new system for monitoring and tracking progress has been established is ensuring pupils' good progress throughout the school. They achieve well. From a broadly average start, the school's data indicate that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving above expectations for their age overall and are on track to reach the challenging targets set for them. The quality of teaching and learning is good and is underpinned by outstanding relationships between teachers and pupils. Some lessons are outstanding. Lessons are planned well so that new learning builds systematically on what pupils already know. Pupils are well cared for in school. Strong guidance as to their personal well-being and relationships has a major impact on overall personal development. Nevertheless, teachers do not sufficiently share learning targets with pupils or ensure that they have sufficient guidance about what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is outstanding in the way it promotes pupils' enjoyment of school. Their good achievement thrives on the staggering range and quality of opportunities they have to develop their individual skills and to foster their many interests.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's inclusive and dynamic leadership has contributed significantly to moulding the newly formed school into a single unit. The governing body has been very perceptive in the planning and implementation of strategies to help bring this about. Governors provide strong support and challenge for the school and work hard to extend the school's reputation and effectiveness in the community. They manage finances well to maintain a high quality learning environment and ensure good value for money. Many parents comment on the success of the amalgamation and share the view that Church Lane is established as a good school. There are rigorous systems for monitoring the school's performance. Senior leaders are fully committed to the school's improvement and work vigorously to support the headteacher in gaining an accurate overview of its work. Despite the good progress seen in establishing 'one school', leaders recognise that there is still work to be done. Although some headway is evident, it is too soon to gauge the full impact of the strategies employed to address the areas which the school has identified for development. These include

further improving standards in writing and developing provision in the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, there is good capacity for the school to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. As a result of good liaison with the on-site pre-school, most children are confident about starting their Reception year in school. Relationships with parents are strong. Many parents help regularly in Reception classes, contributing to the children's positive start to school life. Children's levels of development are broadly matched to those expected for their age when they enter Reception. They make good progress, and most are on course to meet or exceed the levels expected when they start Year 1. Progress in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and personal development is particularly good because teaching of these aspects permeates all activities. Teaching is good. All staff have a good knowledge of each child's requirements. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those which children choose for themselves. Occasionally, staff tend to remain with their focus group of children rather than intervene and support others who are working independently. The outdoor area is used well and children are free to choose outside activities for most of the time. Assessments are carried out regularly, providing clear evidence of progress although there is scope to develop the way in which individual children's achievements are recorded. Although the appointment of a Foundation Stage leader is pending, current staff members are managing well. There is good support from local authority advisers and the senior leadership team whose members monitor teaching and learning. Strong team work ensures that all the staff's skills are put to best use.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are fully aware of their learning targets and are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Throughout the school pupils achieve well. They make good progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology as well as in physical education and art. Outstanding progress in reading ensures that almost all pupils reach, and many exceed, expected levels by the end of Year 6. School data, based on accurate and effective tracking, strongly indicate that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are performing above expectations for their ages in English, mathematics and science. Despite this, the school is not complacent. For example, one of the school's targets is to improve standards of writing and a positive start has been made towards achieving this across the whole school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and take very good care of it. Inspectors found them to be polite and well mannered, and they behave responsibly in lessons and around school. The quality of relationships is perhaps best summed up by the comment, 'We respect our teachers and they respect us.' Pupils attend school regularly and records show that attendance by pupils in Year 6 is very high. Pupils are fully aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe and healthy. They appreciate the healthy choices at lunchtimes and are always very keen to join in

the excellent range of sports activities provided. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying and that playtimes are safe and enjoyable. Older pupils take on caring responsibilities such as being 'buddies' or play leaders to ensure that this is so. Pupils' experiences with local industries and opportunities to sample vocational trades and crafts ensure that they are very well prepared to make choices about their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching accounts for pupils' good progress. Pupils entirely agree that lessons are fun. This is because teachers use resources well, especially interactive whiteboards, to engage pupils in learning and to increase interest and challenge. A good example was seen in a science lesson where pupils' knowledge of life processes was tested well when they had to programme the healthiest lifestyles for different characters. Teachers manage pupils well because of the outstanding relationships established. There is an atmosphere of mutual support in lessons so pupils feel confident and are willing ask questions and share their views with others. Ability grouping for literacy and numeracy lessons means that pupils' needs are met well. Good use of pupils' first-hand experiences adds interest to activities. For example, some purposeful writing was seen where pupils were compiling information leaflets about the residential centre they had visited recently. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons by providing good support for groups of pupils during activity times.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The rich and stimulating curriculum helps pupils to develop a strong desire to learn. The very strong emphasis on basic skills, particularly reading, pays dividends by providing the basis for good achievement across the whole curriculum. The quality and range of activities which enrich learning are excellent, for example the opportunities provided through the 'Wistonia University'. This is where parents, grandparents and other skilled community members introduce pupils in Years 3 to 6 to a vast range of skills and crafts to stimulate their interest in learning. Residential visits are planned from Year 2 onwards, culminating in a Year 6 trip to Le Chateau du Brutel where pupils improve both their personal development and French speaking skills. After-school clubs are very popular and well attended. Programmes for personal, social, health education and citizenship are well established. Consequently, pupils are enabled to make confident choices about their own safety and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents agree unanimously that their children are well cared for in school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and are very sensitive to any particular emotional and other needs. The most vulnerable pupils are well provided for and supported through effective individual learning programmes so that they achieve well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including health and safety checks, meet requirements. Pupils feel safe in school and know that there is always adult support when needed. Academic support and guidance is good although not as strong as pastoral care. Effective whole-school systems for tracking pupils' progress enable teachers to set targets. However, these are not shared well enough with pupils

so they are not always clear about what they are expected to achieve or fully understand what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The charismatic headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. During the relatively short period since amalgamation he has successfully established a cohesive and hard-working staff team. Systems for monitoring teaching performance are good and pupils' academic progress is tracked effectively to ensure the setting of challenging targets. Senior leaders provide very good support for the headteacher and subject leaders have gained a good overview of the whole school curriculum. All contribute well to school improvement. The school is well resourced. Improvements to the outside environment such as the outdoor classroom and areas for planting add significantly to the scope of learning opportunities. Links with industry and other providers are highly effective and greatly enhance pupils' learning and personal development. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are effective critical partners in the school's development.

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	NA
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	2
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?	1
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**

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently may I say thank you for lovely welcome you gave us. We enjoyed our visit very much. You showed us clearly that your manners, courtesy and behaviour are all very good. We were pleased to find that your attendance is very good and we hope that you will keep that up.

You have a good school. Some things about it are outstanding, for example the way teachers plan exciting activities for you to enjoy at school and the way you are all so keen to learn. We agree with you that your lessons are good and that teachers work hard to make them fun. We also found that you are very well looked after by the grown-ups and that you look after each other very well too. Your headteacher leads the school well and has some exciting ideas for the future.

Despite all the good things I have mentioned, your teachers, governors and parents would like to see you all doing even better. We discussed this with your headteacher and agreed that it would be better for you to know exactly what your learning targets are and that your teachers should make sure that you always know the steps you must take to reach them.