

Tithe Barn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106080
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	324327
Inspection date	15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	214
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Fitzjohn
Headteacher	Mr T Buckley
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mauldeth Road Heaton Mersey Stockport Cheshire SK4 3NG
Telephone number	0161 4324941
Fax number	0161 4421718

Age group	4–11
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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 issues: achievement and standards, leadership and management, care guidance and support, and some aspects of personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, parents' questionnaires, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and of assessment data and other documents. In addition, discussions were held with pupils, the chair of governors and key staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves a residential area of mainly private housing. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Reception class. The majority of pupils are White British, with approximately 25% of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Only a very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds a number of awards including the Eco-School Green Flag, Geography Gold Award, International School Award, The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, and Artsmark. The school also has 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: 1

This is an outstanding school. The headteacher's excellent leadership and vision are at the heart of its sustained success. He is superbly supported by the deputy headteacher, a highly skilled and dedicated staff and an extremely capable and effective governing body. The school has made excellent improvements since the last inspection and provides outstanding value for money. Its unique and innovative approach to all areas of its work springs from its own creation, the 'brainforest way', which was commented on favourably in the previous inspection report. The approach has been further refined and continues to be extremely successful in meeting the school's aims of producing highly competent learners with a wide range of personal, social and practical skills. The school's contribution to community cohesion is exemplary. Many members of the local community serve as enthusiastic volunteers in the school. Strong relationships have been established with local businesses and organisations. The school's 'global citizenship' initiative links each of the school's classes with schools across the world. This communication, which involves visits to and visitors from Africa, South America and Europe, encourages pupils to celebrate the differences and similarities of a wide range of cultures. It has also helped the school's work to break down stereotypes in all areas. Pupils say, 'we belong in one world in one school.' The school's self-evaluation is accurate and in view of its consistently high performance and its clear strategies to maintain and improve all areas of its effectiveness, it has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Pupils build on their first-rate start in the EYFS and continue to make outstanding progress to reach exceptionally high standards by age 11. The school's initiatives to improve pupil performance in writing are leading to pupils attaining new heights in this subject. The outstanding quality of teaching and learning and the school's vibrant and exciting curriculum make a major contribution to this success. Very effective use is made of ICT and pupils make excellent use of their well above average skills to aid their progress in all subjects. The teaching they receive is very well planned and stimulating and caters for a range of learning styles. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils in lessons and the high expectations of work and behaviour lead to very effective learning. The contribution of the school's impressive teaching assistants is also crucial to pupils' outstanding achievement. Work is generally very well matched to ability, but sometimes opportunities are missed to allow the most able pupils to make even more progress by working together or individually rather than as part of the whole class.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all its pupils. There is an exceptionally strong family atmosphere and sense of togetherness within the school. Pupils say they are well cared for by the dedicated staff and know there is always someone to turn to should they be upset or troubled. Links with outside agencies are very well developed. Arrangements to safeguard pupils and ensure their safety are in place and meet current guidelines. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress in this inclusive school as a result of the expert and sensitive support they receive. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is outstanding. It is careful to ensure that all its pupils benefit as much as possible from the variety of experiences it provides. Pupils' progress towards challenging targets is carefully assessed and help provided where needed. The school has greatly improved the guidance it gives to pupils about their work since the previous inspection. Marking uses praise well but also gives clear advice about how pupils can improve their work. Pupils are becoming

increasingly skilled in assessment of their own and each other's work, which helps to improve their progress further.

Pupils of all ages thrive within the school's 'cheerful, confident achievers' programme, an integral part of the 'brainforest way'. Pupils are polite, extremely cheerful and welcoming and very proud of their school. Inspectors were struck by the genuine warmth that exists between all members of the school community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and take advantage of the wealth of clubs and activities it makes available to them. They are made aware of their own potential and their power to realise it from an early age. Attendance is consistently excellent and parents are delighted with the school's work and approach to education. They say, 'Every child is treated as an individual and our child is really benefiting from this approach.' Pupils say they feel safe and that bullying is practically non-existent. The few disagreements are quickly dealt with, often by the pupils themselves. Pupils are keen to stay healthy, eat well and take exercise. They are encouraged to take responsibility and have a real voice in the running of the school. The energetic school council and the eco-warriors have a high profile and have been involved in staff selection and in improving resources. Pupils have exceptional involvement in their local and wider communities. Fund-raising for school and for a range of charities is highly developed. Pupils' knowledge of the world of work is further enhanced by the outstanding opportunities to experience commercial and enterprise activities. This, together with their very high standards in numeracy and literacy means that they are extremely well prepared for success in later life.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an outstanding start in the EYFS. They enter Reception with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Excellent links and relationships are quickly established with parents and carers and, as a result, children settle very quickly and make outstanding progress to reach standards well above the expectations for their age at the end of Reception. This is the result of particularly effective teaching and a well thought out programme of learning that promotes progress in all areas, especially in social development. Children's excellent achievement is further enhanced by the high quality of ongoing assessment by all staff that informs the teaching of each child. Children's overall personal development benefits greatly from the use made of stimulating and exciting indoor and outdoor learning areas. These are adapted daily to meet children's individual needs and interests and they soon develop positive attitudes to their learning, behave impeccably and get on very well together. Staff ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between child initiated and adult led activities to ensure highly effective learning and development for all children. The EYFS promotes the welfare of its children outstandingly well. Children are safe, very happy and motivated and grow into confident and inquisitive learners as a result. Leadership and management are outstanding. Teamwork is very strong and staff are deployed most effectively within the very well organised learning areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils are given more opportunities in all subjects to work together and individually on tasks that will further extend their skills, knowledge and progress.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I would like to share with you what we found out.

You go to an outstanding school. You work very hard in lessons and make excellent progress. The staff really want you to do as well as possible and they look after you and give you excellent advice about how to improve your work. You told us that you think the 'cheerful, confident achievers' programme really helps your learning and your attitudes. It has made you very aware of the importance of being the best you can be. At the same time, you have not lost sight of caring for each other and of meeting your responsibilities in the local and world community as Global Citizens. We were tremendously impressed with the bonds and friendships you have made with your community and with children all over the world. You like to stay healthy and keep fit. You told us too how much you enjoy your lessons and the great variety of activities, visits and visitors that your school organises, particularly in sport, music, drama and business. Your school council and your eco-warriors have taken a major part in helping run the school and improve the school site.

We would like you to do even better in your work and so we have suggested something that will help. We would like your teachers to provide those of you working at the highest levels with even more opportunities to work together and individually in all subjects. This will help further your skills and knowledge so you make even more progress. You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best.