

# Wilmslow Grange Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	111014
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	325272
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Liam Trippier HMI

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jim Lethbridge
Headteacher	Mr G Mendham
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Ullswater Road Handforth Wilmslow SK9 3NG
Telephone number	01625 526566
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' workbooks. 78 parental questionnaires were received and the content was considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2
- the quality of teaching and learning
- how effectively assessment is used to guide pupils and inform teachers
- how well senior leaders' actions are having a positive impact on standards
- the impact of the school's care, guidance and support on pupils' personal development.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school that serves the village of Handforth near Wilmslow. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. A lower than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; however, the school has resourced provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The school has been awarded Activemark 2008 and is an Investor in People.

There is a breakfast club and an after-school club on the school site run by the Wilmslow Grange Out of School Provision. This provision was inspected at the same time and a separate report for this organisation is available on the Ofsted website.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

This is a good and improving school with an outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's leaders ensure that good-quality care, guidance and support, good teaching and an interesting curriculum drive the school forward quickly after a period of disruption. Staff work together effectively to provide interesting lessons for pupils. The school's concerted effort to raise standards further is having a positive effect throughout the school, particularly at Key Stage 2 following lower than expected test results in 2008.

Leaders and managers have a very clear view about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Any weaknesses identified are tackled systematically. Leaders are insightful and share a common purpose to raise standards through rigorous monitoring, evaluation and action planning. The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis because the systems and procedures in place are understood by all. Actions to tackle the areas for improvement since the last inspection have been effective and although there have been some significant changes to the staff team, the school is well placed to improve.

Achievement is good because pupils make good progress throughout the school and in their lessons. There was drop in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008 but the school has compelling evidence, backed up by inspectors' findings, to suggest that pupils throughout the school are on track to meet and surpass their challenging targets. Pupils make good progress because the teaching is responsive to their needs and interests. They get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this gives them a firm foundation to continue to make good progress. Pupils respond well to the staff's clear expectations and lively teaching. They learn quickly in lessons through discussion and focused tasks. Learning slows when the pupils are not as fully involved and when feedback and marking from the teacher doesn't tell them exactly how to improve their work.

Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. The school has started to promote community cohesion more actively, to ensure that pupils have opportunities to mix with others from different backgrounds, but has not yet developed a comprehensive plan based on a detailed analysis of the school population.

The good quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils has a positive effect on their personal development. Pupils conduct themselves well, in and around the school, and understand important health and safety issues.

## What does the school need to do to improve further

Establish a comprehensive plan to promote community cohesion by:

- developing a more detailed analysis of the school community and its needs
- effectively evaluating and using opportunities that give pupils the chance to mix and communicate with those from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:

- developing a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work
- increasing the level of engagement of pupils through better questioning techniques to develop deeper learning
- encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for and direct their own learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils' progress, observed in lessons and in workbooks, is good overall due to the good teaching they receive. In lessons, teachers effectively use assessment information to plan suitable activities that enthuse and motivate pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to identify similarities and differences between their lives and children living in rainforests through investigation and discussion with well-focused feedback from the teacher. Pupils were highly motivated and able to deepen their understanding as the lesson progressed through the teacher's skilful questioning techniques and well-chosen resources. In a small minority of lessons, pupils' progress is slower, especially when they are not fully involved in activities. Scrutiny of workbooks showed progress is good throughout the school but in one or two cases there is an over-reliance on simple worksheets which limit pupils' responses. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress and their work in small groups with adult support has a positive impact on their rates of learning. The provision for special educational needs is very well managed, ensuring all pupils have access to the curriculum through well-targeted and sensitive support.

Standards at Key Stage 1 are above average and have been for several years. Pupils' attainment was highest in writing and mathematics in 2008. Standards have risen since the last inspection, particularly for more able pupils in Key Stage 1. Current school data strongly suggests that this level of attainment is being maintained. Despite a downturn in Key Stage 2 test results in English, mathematics and science in 2008, considerable improvements have been made since then. Pupils' current work indicates they are on track to reach their challenging targets. There are no significant differences between the performance of different groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. They appreciate the new security systems the school has put in place recently. Pupils move around the school building sensibly and adopt safe practices in the playground. They understand why they have to adhere to school rules. Pupils say that if they have any concerns they are taken

seriously and dealt with by staff. Behaviour is good in lessons and most pupils demonstrate high standards of conduct. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are active at playtimes and engage well in the many sporting activities on offer. Most pupils know about eating healthily, although a small minority bring unhealthy snacks to school.

Pupils enjoy the good opportunities to engage with the local community. For example, they organise and run a charity car-wash weekend and sing Christmas carols for pensioners. They enthusiastically raise money for several causes at home and abroad. Their good basic skills are enhanced by an improving curriculum and a focus on communication skills in school. Pupils also enjoy taking positions of responsibility as 'playground pals' and 'phys kids' and undertake their duties very effectively. Attendance is broadly average and pupils know why they should attend school regularly. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is reflected in their behaviour and conduct around school. They convey a good set of values including fair play, good morals and sensitivity to issues; for example in Year 5 the pupils sensitively considered the feelings of people affected by war when writing some very moving poetry.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic, have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, a news broadcast was used successfully to stimulate pupils to think about speaking for different audiences. In the best lessons, teachers ensure the pace of learning is brisk and encourage pupils to talk about their thinking with each other to consolidate ideas. Regular feedback is provided by teachers so all pupils are aware of their success, which motivates them to achieve higher levels. In a minority of lessons learning slows because the teacher has not sufficiently involved all the pupils in the lesson.

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The school's rigorous and systematic monitoring of pupils' performance quickly identifies any underachievement effectively and high quality support is provided. However, marking in pupils' books although generally positive, is of variable quality. Some marking is excellent with clear steps for improvement and evidence of pupils working together to assess each other's work. In some year groups, marking does not provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve.

The good curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Good attention is paid to pupils' personal development and relationships through the teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning, and in the school's day-to-day routines and procedures. Creative and expressive arts are promoted well and pupils enjoy learning French from Year 2 onwards. The school's provision is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended by all groups of pupils. The curriculum meets the needs of learners with difficulties and/or disabilities well.

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Relationships observed during the inspection were supportive and considerate. Close monitoring of progress and well-being ensures that all pupils are supported effectively. There are good links with services to support pupils, such as the on-site family support worker. The quality of care exhibited for pupils with the greatest level of need is exemplary. Transition arrangements between all key stages and classes are good and provide pupils with the appropriate guidance they need to prepare them for the next stage in their education. Attendance is satisfactory and the school has procedures in place which are securing improvement.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors demonstrate high expectations in relation to pupils' academic standards and personal development. Leaders at all levels share the same vision for improvement. Progress since the last inspection has been good overall and leaders have overcome some significant staffing issues well.

Senior and middle leaders are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses within their subjects and areas of responsibility. Challenging targets are set by leaders to move the school forward. Staff are held to account to ensure pupils in their care make good progress through regular monitoring of all aspects of their work.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Safeguarding procedures, including risk assessments, are secure and regularly reviewed. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily in the school and although a detailed plan has not been

established, the school strives to provide opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and faiths successfully.

Governors support and challenge the school well and are very clear about their duty to ensure the school secures good outcomes for the pupils. Governors are directly involved in seeking parents' views and use the information to improve links with families and develop good practice in the school.

Partnerships are promoted well and the headteacher has worked effectively to ensure a family support worker is based at the school to liaise with families and support pupils as necessary. The quality of communication with families is good with regular contact via the school website and newsletters. Annual reports about pupils' progress to parents meet statutory requirements but do not provide parents with ways to help their children achieve their targets at home. The school provides good value for money and the capacity to improve is good.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with personal skills, attributes and abilities that are broadly typical of children of this age. High-quality provision ensures that most children make good progress. Some make excellent progress. Children are confident and secure and this provides a firm foundation from which they can continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Children have an excellent understanding of safe practices and play with enthusiasm and energy while taking care of others. They behave very well in class, taking turns and making sensible choices. Children sustain their interest in activities well. They thoroughly enjoy their time in lessons; for example, in an outstanding lesson in the Nursery about night and day, children were so motivated by the teaching they all wanted to take part and were visibly excited about experiencing total darkness. Staff used this activity effectively to develop children's understanding and vocabulary about night and day. The learning environment is excellent and health and safety issues are carefully considered. All adults deal with children sensitively and monitor and assess their progress carefully. The quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding as the leaders have a very clear view of the strengths and areas to develop.



Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wilmslow Grange Primary and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 78 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 190 parents and carers registered at the school. Most parents and carers who made their views known to the inspection team expressed very positive views of the school. They conveyed a strong sense that their children enjoy their school experiences and feel secure and well cared for. One parent said their son was 'extremely happy in school'. This view also matches that of the pupils, articulated during their discussions with inspectors. Parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were especially appreciative of the care and support their children receive.

A small number of parents expressed a view concerning the frequency of information about pupils' progress. The governing body were aware of this and are undertaking a review of arrangements.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	21	2	1

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wilmslow Grange Primary and Nursery School, Wilmslow,  
SK9 3NG

Thank you for making Mr Griffin and myself so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We very much appreciated your support and help. The report is now complete and I would like to tell you what it contains.

Here are some of the things we found.

- Wilmslow Grange is a good school.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide an outstanding education for the younger children.
- The staff take good care of you.
- You behave well.
- You work hard and make good progress in lessons.
- You feel safe and happy in school.
- You enjoy a good range of activities provided by the school.

I have asked Mr Mendham to look at improving the way the school promotes community cohesion, for example by having clear plans to provide you with opportunities to mix with other people from different backgrounds to your own. I have also asked him to make your lessons even better to make sure all the teachers mark your books with comments to help you improve and to challenge you in lessons to think and contribute even more.

You can continue to play your part by making sure you come to school every day and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Liam Trippier

Her Majesty's Inspector

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