

Nether Alderley Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 111019 |
| Local Authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 325274 |
| Inspection date | 23 April 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Kevin Johnson |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 103 |
| 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 | Mr M Gorton |
| Headteacher | Mr Richard Craven |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 February 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Bradford Lane Nether Alderley Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 4TR |
| Telephone number | 01625 383060 |
| Fax number | 01625 584687 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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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: standards reached by pupils and the progress they make; the quality of teaching and learning; aspects of care, guidance and support; provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; and leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessments, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, discussion with members of staff and pupils and from parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Almost all pupils are White British. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class in school. The school has achieved the Activemark, Healthy Schools Awards and Basic Skills Quality Mark. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils are well cared for and valued as important members of the school community. They make good progress. Pupils' personal development and the curriculum are outstanding.

Pupils show immense enjoyment of school. They are eager to learn and like their teachers because, they say, they make lessons exciting. Music, art, drama and sport are extremely popular and contribute much to pupils' good all-round achievement. Displays of work, discussions with pupils and records of sporting achievements show that many pupils excel in these areas. The Thursday Club is a special feature of the greatly enriched curriculum that heightens pupils' enjoyment of school. This is when parents offer their skills and expertise to work with pupils on a wide choice of activities in and outside of the classroom. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is outstanding. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average. Their unfailing politeness and courtesy ensure excellent relationships and exemplary behaviour. Pupils say that they can approach any member of staff if they have a problem and that they feel safe in school. They have very good knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own. Pupils fully understand the importance of a sensible diet and plenty of exercise to stay healthy, and they know how to stay safe. They choose thoughtfully from lunch and snack menus and the range of physical activities they take up fully justifies the school's Activemark award. All pupils are involved in school affairs through the highly effective school council whose excellent work is evidenced by a recently installed adventure playground. Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities that help them develop the important skills they need to be active community members. They work collaboratively with parents, for example to organise events, and are involved in fundraising schemes for many worthy causes. By the time pupils leave the school, they are confident, self-motivated young people, extremely well prepared to move onto the next stage of their education.

Pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress and currently reach above average standards. This represents good achievement and is accounted for by the good quality of teaching and learning. Standards until 2007 were maintained at above average levels at both key stages but showed an untypical decline in 2008. Published national test results show below average attainment at the end of Year 2 and average levels at the end of Year 6. This coincided with a period of unsettled staffing in both Year 2 and Year 6 owing to staff illness, as well as differences in the overall abilities of those particular year groups. The small numbers in each cohort was also a contributory factor to the outcome of national test results. Nevertheless, data show that the Year 6 pupils made good progress based on their Year 2 attainment. The pupils in Year 2 attained broadly average levels in reading and mathematics but writing standards were too low. Although writing is now a main focus for improvement, it is too early to judge if enough has been done. School assessments and inspection evidence indicate that the 2008 dip was temporary. Standards have improved significantly at Key Stage 1 and in Year 6 all pupils are on track to reach at least the expected level for their age, with a significant proportion set to achieve a higher level. Precise identification of pupils' different needs, and subsequent good support, means that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Teachers' expectations are high so pupils are challenged well; this motivates them to work hard. Lessons are planned well to take account of the different ages and abilities in the classes. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers, providing valuable support for groups

and individual pupils. Teachers use a good range of strategies to inject fun into learning. For example, Year 1 children learned about rounding up to 10 by working out how many 10p coins they would need to buy various food items. This linked their learning to their current topic on food, which made learning more enjoyable. Relationships in lessons are such that there is always a good rapport between teachers and pupils.

Leadership and management of the school are good. In the short time since his appointment, the headteacher's incisive analysis of the school's progress has contributed to accurate self-evaluation and a clear vision for its future direction. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and summarise their views in comments such as '...a shining example of what a school should be'. The expertise of the deputy headteacher and commitment of all staff are crucial factors in the school's successful drive for improvement. More rigorous and accurate assessment, and use of data to set targets, has in turn improved the effectiveness of teaching and raised standards. Higher expectations are reflected in the challenging targets set by school leaders. Equality of opportunity and care are central to the school's work. To those ends, leaders ensure that safeguarding is robust, meeting national requirements, and that every child is supported equally. The school works cohesively with local schools and groups to promote opportunities for pupils to learn and develop a sense of belonging to the community. Pupils also learn about everyday life in other countries and recent work on Africa has led to pupils discussing ways of supporting communities in that continent. Nevertheless, the school is at a very early stage of implementing its action plan on community cohesion and pupils do not have sufficient understanding of the lives of communities beyond their own locality. Governors support the school well. They challenge the school vigorously over standards and share in the process of setting targets. Decisions are backed by the very good range of expertise within the governing body. Finances are managed well and governors ensure that the school provides good value for money. Given the strengths in leadership and the improvement already evident, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children's learning and development are managed well and they make good progress. Children's skills are broadly in line with expectations for their age when they enter Reception. Almost all reach all of their early learning goals and some are more advanced when they transfer to Year 1. Personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Children quickly become familiar with classroom routines and show high levels of confidence and independence in their play. They work harmoniously with one another and behave extremely well. Daily work on letters and sounds prepares children well to tackle reading and writing on their own. This contributes well to the whole-school focus on writing. Teachers plan an exciting variety of activities, with a good balance between those led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Provision for children's welfare is outstanding. Their well-being is given the highest priority. All staff members share the task of assessing children's development and progress and planning the next step in children's learning. Relationships with parents are very positive and staff take every opportunity to share information about their children's development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that pupils have a greater understanding of communities beyond their own locality.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| 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? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| 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**

Inspection of Nether Alderley Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 4TR

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We had a delightful time in your school. It was a pleasure to talk to you not only because you had so many interesting things to tell us but also because you are extremely well-mannered and polite. I was also delighted to see how exceptionally well behaved you are and that your attendance at school is above average. All of those things are very important so do keep them up. Oh! And is that really one of David Beckham's old football boots on display in the entrance hall?

You have a good school. In fact some things about it are outstanding. I have already mentioned some of them but I can add the curriculum to that list. That is the way your teachers plan all of those exciting ways for you to learn, enjoy school and stay safe. You make good progress in your work because you are taught well and this year you have reached better standards in your work. The grown-ups in school take really good care of you and that helps you to enjoy school and achieve well.

Your parents love your school as much as you do. They, as well as your teachers and school governors, want it to be even better. I have suggested two things to help that to happen. The first is to help children reach better standards in their writing by the end of Year 2. The other is to help all of you to understand more about the important things that affect the lives of people from different countries across the world.

Good luck to all of you (I wonder if he scored a goal with that boot?) and best wishes.