

Frodsham Manor House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111236
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	325325
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Mr Jim Kidd

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adam Kilborn
Headteacher	Mr Ian Devereux-Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Langdale Way Frodsham WA6 7LE
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including relevant policies, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors also analysed 44 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- The challenge in lessons for pupils, in order to ascertain whether it is high enough to ensure that more reach the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.
- The opportunities pupils have to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- The involvement of pupils in assessing their own work and their involvement in setting targets for improvement.
- The involvement of middle leaders and governors in bringing about school improvement.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the accuracy of assessment of children's progress.

Information about the school

This smaller than average sized school serves a mixed area and pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils new to learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than usually found. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. Frodsham Manor House is a nationally accredited Healthy School, has the Activemark and achieved the Artsmark (Gold) award for the third time in 2008.

The Play Den pre-school provision was inspected separately and receives a separate report, which 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 in which pupils' outcomes and the care, guidance and support provided for them are outstanding. The headteacher leads by example and has a clear vision for how the school should develop. All staff share and are fully committed to this vision and levels of teamwork are high. The governing body is developing well, is fully supportive of the school but does not have an effective enough oversight of curriculum provision. Nonetheless, staff and governors are ambitious for the pupils and want the very best for them. The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Indeed the areas for improvement outlined in this report are recognised by the school and are mentioned in the school improvement plan. The school provides good value for money.

All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress across the school and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and rising. More and more pupils are reaching the higher National Curriculum levels and their skills in writing are improving markedly. Pupils enjoy their lessons, take responsibility for their own learning and have many opportunities to assess their own performance and that of their peers.

Pupils are immensely proud of their school, of their classmates and of the adults who work with them. They welcome visitors warmly and are only too keen to show them their work. They behave exceptionally well, support each other with skill and verve and are actively involved in community events in the local area and beyond. They have an excellent awareness of cultures and religions which are different to their own and treat their peers with respect and sensitivity. The school council has a high reputation amongst its constituents and does what it can to support their views.

Teaching is good overall and some of it is outstanding. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and challenge them to higher and higher levels of performance. As a result pupils learn with eagerness and set themselves increasingly challenging targets for improvement. Staff are creative in developing the curriculum and enrichment activities are highly regarded and exceptionally supported by their pupils. Teachers are aware that they need to help pupils identify links between different aspects of their learning so that they can apply their skills in all areas of the curriculum. Care, guidance and support are outstanding in every respect and are recognised as such by pupils and their parents. Each individual is valued and made to feel valuable. Pupils hold their teachers, teaching assistants and other adults in the school in the highest regard. As parents comment, 'Frodsham Manor House is a

lovely school. It gives great encouragement to our children and enables each and every one of them to grow in confidence.'

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Continue the development of the creative curriculum, to ensure that pupils can see the links between subjects and can apply the skills gained in one area to all other aspects of their learning.
- Further develop the role of the governing body so that it has a more effective oversight of the curriculum provided for all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From broadly average age-related skills on entry to the Reception class, pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Standards are rising in both key stages and attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 has improved significantly since 2007. The percentage of pupils in Year 6 reaching the higher National Curriculum Level 5 has risen markedly in the past two years. In addition, the school's work to ensure that pupils have opportunities to practise their skills in extended writing across the curriculum has borne fruit and attainment in this area is improving apace. Pupils are fully engaged in their lessons, enjoy the wide variety of activities to reinforce their learning and rise willingly to the realistic levels of challenge of their teachers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive outstanding support from their teachers, teaching assistants and peers, make the same good progress as others and are now reaching average levels of attainment as a result.

Pupils love their school and their attendance is consistently above average. Their behaviour is impeccable and they act in lessons and around school with a maturity which belies their years. They feel safe and secure in school because, as they say, 'Our teachers are always there if we have any problems and the older pupils look after us too.' They have a keen understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet and add that they eat healthily both at school and at home. They take part in a wide range of sports and games during and after school and are not afraid to give visitors advice on the importance of regular exercise and how to stay fit. Pupils have the highest regard for the school council, a body which, they say, 'Made our adventure playground but also gave us choices about which resources we wanted.'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and work hard through the Eco School activities to care for the environment. They have a profound awareness of religions and cultures different to their own, through their strong links with a primary school in Crewe and a school much further afield in Ghana. Their work to foster community spirit in the immediate area is appreciated and local residents are full of praise for their involvement in a variety of events throughout the year.

Good achievement in their academic development and their exceptional personal and social skills mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?	1

How effective is the provision?

Secure subject and specialist knowledge, high expectations of what pupils can achieve and sophisticated questioning which requires pupils to justify their answers are the key features of teaching, which is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups and are adept at assessing and evaluating the quality of not only their own work, but also that of their classmates. In an outstanding Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were actively involved in setting their own personal targets, in preparation for their entry into high school. Similarly, pupils in an excellent Year 4 lesson were fully aware of what was needed to improve their work and those of higher ability in mathematics benefited from ongoing challenge throughout. Teachers recognise that, on occasions, the pace of learning slows because activities are not changed quickly enough. Marking is generally good and the best practice gives pupils detailed advice on how they can improve their work.

Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to enliven the curriculum and pupils believe that many aspects of it are so exciting that they cannot wait to come to school. Teachers are continuing to develop the curriculum because they are aware that pupils could have a better understanding of the links between subjects and of how their skills can be reinforced in all areas. The range and take up of enrichment activities are very impressive. The school is alive at lunchtime and after school with clubs and societies, some of which are provided by school partners, for example, the Liverpool Empire Theatre. Rehearsals for the annual production are at an advanced stage and both pupils and staff are looking forward to their stage production of 'Oliver.'

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

The overriding concern to include each individual in all aspects of its life lies at the very heart of everything the school tries to do. Indeed, guidance and support are of a high order and teachers and teaching assistants do everything they can to maximise the progress, both personal and academic, of all pupils in their charge. Pastoral care is a major strength and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those identified as vulnerable receive excellent personal attention.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school provides personalised support for all who need it and 'equality of opportunity for everyone' are, therefore, bywords in school. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported to the hilt by a talented and committed senior leadership team, leads the way in setting aspirational targets for both adults and children. As a result standards are improving across the school and leaders at all levels share the same clear vision for development. Subject coordinators evaluate performance in their areas well and comment that they are encouraged to take initiative and be creative in their curriculum planning. Without doubt, this is a 'thinking school', in which complacency is rejected and in which all staff are more than keen to try out new approaches to raise standards and to improve provision. This is demonstrated by the ways in which areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been tackled: pupils are now much more involved in assessing their own work and progress and their skills in writing have improved markedly because of greater emphasis on extended writing in all subject areas.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and pupils benefit from links with local groups, with schools in more diverse communities and with its partner school in Ghana. Teachers are now preparing to involve the school council in an evaluation of the impact of these links, with a view to establishing an action plan to develop them further. Links with parents and carers are outstanding and lead to excellent home/school relationships and the active involvement of parents in all areas of school life. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and fully meet national guidelines.

Governors are very supportive of the school and they hold senior leaders most rigorously to account. Links between the governing body and subject departments are developing but are not yet extensive enough to ensure that governors have the required oversight of the curriculum provided for all pupils.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skill levels on entry to the Reception class vary from year-to-year but are generally in line with the expectations for their age. Their progress is good overall, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their creative development. Progress is not quite as good in calculation. Children's behaviour is outstanding and they demonstrate good levels of independence in their learning. The physical layout of the outdoor area is not quite as good as that indoors and some activities are a little cramped.

The attractive and well organised learning environment is commented on positively by parents who believe that it fosters children's enjoyment of learning and makes them feel proud of the work they produce. There is a good balance between teacher led and child initiated activities and children are more than happy to show visitors their different learning areas, including the travel agency. Assessment is good and staff have an accurate picture of the progress the children are making. The care and support children receive are outstanding. Children have the utmost confidence in the adults who work with them.

Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures that policies, records and procedures are fully in place. Relationships between staff, parents and their children are excellent and parents receive good advice on how they may support their children's learning at home.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about what the school does for their sons and daughters and there were many comments during the inspection, both orally and in writing, about the sense of community which the school engenders among all those connected with it. Parents are particularly positive about the leadership of the headteacher and of the ways the school ensures that each individual is cared for, supported and valued. Typical comments include, 'The inspirational headteacher and the committed and motivated staff are always positive and are full of energy and enthusiasm. Our children are privileged to attend the school.' Inspectors support these positive views.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Frodsham Manor House Primary 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 44 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 162 parents/carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	5	0	0

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.



1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Frodsham Manor House Primary School, Frodsham, WA6 7LE

Thank you for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We are particularly grateful to the pupils who came to talk to us during Monday lunchtime and we really enjoyed the 'wake-up, shake-up!' session and also the 'Oliver' rehearsal. We know you were very keen to find out how the inspection went and I would now like to tell you the things we found out about your school.

Frodsham Manor House is a good school and we know that you, your parents and your teachers are very proud of it. You make good progress in your studies, work hard in your lessons and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave for high school. Your behaviour is excellent and you do so much to support and help your classmates. Play leaders look after younger pupils really well and the school council works very hard to represent your views. You know why it is important to eat a balanced diet and to keep fit and you take part in many after school activities, including sport and games. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children there are also making good progress in their learning.

Your teachers teach you well and the care and support you receive from all the adults who work with you are exceptional. The school does everything it can to make sure that each one of you gets maximum benefit from all that Frodsham Manor offers you. Many of you take part in the cultural activities, such as music and drama and you enjoy the trips, visits and visitors which are such a big part of school life.

Your headteacher and all the other staff work very well as a team and are always looking for ways to make your school even better. I have asked them to continue with the good work they are doing on developing the curriculum and to make sure that you can practise the skills you learn in one subject in all the other subjects you study. You have already done this in writing and just look at how your standards have improved! I have also asked them to make sure that governors look at the work of the school even more closely.

Thanks again for your help with the inspection. We enjoyed watching you learn.

Best wishes

Jim Kidd
Lead inspector

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