

Delamere Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111259
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325332
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Gill Jones HMI

This 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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Craig Stockton
Headteacher	Mr Steve Docking
Date of previous school inspection	February 2006
School address	Stoney Lane Kelsall Tarporley Cheshire CW6 0ST
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). The inspector visited 8 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff, pupils and parents. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including: the school development plan and developing creativity plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; individual education plans; minutes of governors meetings and 35 parental questionnaires.

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

- how well school identifies pupils' individual potential and matches the curriculum to the needs of pupils
- how effective school leadership is in improving outcomes for pupils
- how much pupils enjoy their education and whether they know how to keep fit, healthy and safe
- the capacity of the school to sustain recent improvement.

Information about the school

Delamere C of E Primary is a very small village school, situated in rural Cheshire. The pupils are taught in 3 mixed-age classes, Foundation Stage (Reception) and Year 1, Years 2, 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. The headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection, but all the teaching staff are relatively new to the school. Most pupils who attend the school live outside the village and many are from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs is higher than found in other schools nationally. The school provides a breakfast club and after school club.

The school has gained a number of national awards which include, Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools Status, Activemark and Eco Status.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Delamere C of E Primary is an outstanding school. Since the last inspection the quality of education provided has been transformed and the school is now a vibrant hub of creativity and learning. The headteacher has very high expectations of what pupils and staff can achieve. This is exemplified by the attractive displays of pupils' work around the school and the high standards achieved. Parents are eager partners in their children's learning and the governors provide an excellent level of challenge and support. Together, this small community ensures that all pupils achieve outstandingly well.

The standards reached in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above those found nationally. In English, though pupils do not reach such exceptionally high standards, their attainment is above the national average. All pupils are set challenging targets, which take account of their individual needs. High quality teaching and effective assessment ensure that targets are met. The efficient systems to track individual pupils' progress ensure that any slowing of progress or underachievement is quickly identified and high quality support is put in place. As a result, although some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who have a statement of special educational need, do not reach the national expectations for 11 year olds, the progress all pupils make is excellent.

Although this is a small school, pupils are provided with a rich and varied curriculum which is relevant to their needs. Professional artists, musicians, dancers and subject specialist teachers are used effectively to ensure that pupils are enabled to achieve well in all subjects. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Excellent use is made of the locality and lessons are well planned to capitalise on pupils' natural inquisitiveness. For example, during a mathematics lesson, pupils were investigating the age of trees in the locality. They recorded their results on the computer and produced a graph enabling them to identify when most trees in the area were planted.

The pupils are confident and courteous. Their behaviour is exemplary and parents report that their children 'love school'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and they say that they feel safe in school. Pupils who attend the breakfast and after school clubs enjoy the excellent level of care provided for them. Parents appreciate the high quality of education and care the school provides and testify to the improvements made since the last inspection.

The leadership of the school has been strengthened by the recent appointment of the assistant headteacher. The headteacher and assistant headteacher communicate their vision for the school effectively and they work together diligently to secure school improvement. The relationships between governors, staff, pupils and parents are excellent and morale is high. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation. This means that it knows its strengths and relative weaknesses well and has plans of good quality to tackle any areas that need improving. This, together with the quality of provision and leadership overall, show that the school has an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement the school's plan for its 'Year of Language' to improve the standards reached in English to match those achieved in mathematics and science by:
 - embedding the new skills based curriculum and ensuring that assessment is used to identify any weaker areas of provision
 - ensuring procedures for assessment and moderation of writing in all classes match the best practice identified within the school
 - introducing a handwriting policy to be applied consistently throughout the school.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

1

Pupils achieve outstandingly well and many reach standards that are well above those expected for their age. Pupils say they enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. Many pupils start the school with skills, knowledge and abilities that are above those typical of 4-year-olds, though there is a wide range of abilities. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they start Year 1, most pupils have achieved the Early Learning Goals and are ready to start the National Curriculum. In 2008, at the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils attained very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the standards attained in 2007 and 2008 were above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level, Level 5, was well above the national average, particularly in mathematics and science. Although standards in reading are high, the progress pupils make in writing is slower. The school has identified this and has good quality plans in place to tackle the issue. Because cohorts are small, there are wide variations in the overall standards reached year-on-year, which reflect the different abilities of the pupils. However, the work in pupils' exercise books shows that they are provided with an appropriate level of challenge and are on track to meet their targets. This means that the school is in a strong position to maintain the high achievement seen over the last 2 years.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding. They present as considerate people who are aware of the needs of others. They concentrate in lessons, work well in groups and as individuals and persist to complete their tasks. For example, in a science investigation, some pupils were not happy with the outcome of their experiment. They were prepared to work out what had gone wrong and start again, showing a mature attitude to learning and exemplifying some of the attributes needed for the workplace. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included well in activities. Pupils say they feel safe and that 'school is like one big family'. They are confident to approach the adults in the school when they need help or support. Most pupils are fit and healthy and are keen to participate in an excellent range of sporting activities. The school council and eco council are very active in local community work and fundraising. Pupils have an influential voice in making changes to the school, particularly in developing play facilities. Pupils display an excellent level of social awareness. For example, during an assembly they were able to discuss barriers to success for different groups of people, including those who sustain a severe disability.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
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
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The school provides an excellent curriculum, which is well planned to cover all the basic skills, with a good emphasis on practical and investigative work. It is enriched by a wealth of visits, visitors and special events, such as the 'ambition day', where pupils dressed up as who they wanted to be and some parents explained their jobs to them. Topic themes, which link subjects such as history, geography, citizenship and information and communication technology (ICT), are a recent introduction, and these are tackled as a whole-school. For example as part of the 'similarity and differences' topic work, the school visited China Town and had lunch in a Chinese restaurant. The leadership team is identifying accurately the strengths and weakness

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

in this relatively new approach and it is being evaluated carefully. The school has invested well in technology which is used effectively to enrich the curriculum. For example, as part of their media and English work pupils film and edit school events, which are then shared with parents and visitors to the school website.

High quality teaching is a strength of the school. Typically, teaching is lively, staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they capture their interest well. Teachers make good use of resources, which keep the pupils motivated. For example, in a science lesson, groups of pupils were given skulls from different species to investigate whether the teeth belonged to a carnivore, herbivore or omnivore. Assessment is used effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, but is more focused in mathematics than in English. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of questioning and observation to challenge the pupils and assess their progress. Marking generally provides clear guidance for improvement and there is some exemplary practice in the school from which to learn. However, there are some relative weaknesses in the presentation of pupils' work which are exacerbated by the absence of a whole-school policy for handwriting.

The school has effective systems to support pupils who need additional guidance and support. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptionally well managed. Excellent use is made of a national scheme of work to promote pupils' emotional health and well-being. Pupils who are gifted and talented are recognised quickly and are provided with excellent opportunities to work with pupils of the same ability.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	1
Effective assessment	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team are highly effective at driving up standards and achievement in all aspects of the school's work. Parents, governors and staff testify to the positive impact of the headteacher in transforming the culture of the school since the last inspection. Pupils say they feel listened to, there is no discrimination and staff report that their strengths are valued and they are given excellent opportunities to develop their skills. Although there is no notable difference in achievement between groups of pupils, events such as 'blokes on board' where dads and grandfathers are invited to participate in activities, are used effectively to promote equality. Partnerships with other schools and organisations are selected well by the leadership to enrich the curriculum and provide additional opportunities for pupils. The leadership is very aware of its virtually mono-cultural population and as a consequence has plans of good quality to extend partnerships to other schools to promote community cohesion. Effective systems are in place to monitor achievement and the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Safeguarding arrangements meet

current requirements.

The governors work tirelessly to support the school. They have a clear vision for the future, know the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide a significant level of challenge to the leadership to secure continuous improvement. They appreciate the input from the local authority school improvement partner in supporting them to identify the areas which they still need to improve. The headteacher and governing body have secured a bursary to enable school to provide a creative curriculum and this is monitored effectively to ensure value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	1
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children start the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) with a wide range of abilities, but many have knowledge and skills that are above those typical for 4-year-olds. They settle well into the school routines and quickly become confident using all the areas of learning available to them. The children currently in Reception are making excellent progress and parents say they love coming to school.

The teaching in Reception is outstanding. Activities are well planned to take account of the children's interests and high quality questioning helps children to develop their communication and language skills well. Excellent use of space and imaginative areas enable the children to learn through real life situations, such as going through the car wash. Early reading and writing activities provide a good level of challenge and are adapted effectively to meet the children's individual needs. Children enjoy the 'letters and sounds morning challenge' on the interactive whiteboard. Parents report that their children are 'coming on in leaps and bounds', which is supported by the school's own data. Although the outdoor provision is of good quality and attractive, there are limited opportunities for children to climb.

The welfare arrangements for children in Reception are excellent. Parents appreciate the information they are provided with and say that staff are approachable. Excellent systems for assessment are in place, but these are very new. They are being used effectively to identify areas where children are progressing less well, but this has yet

to impact on the overall outcomes achieved at the end of Reception. Since the previous inspection, the children in Reception have only made satisfactory progress, though this trend is showing signs of improving rapidly. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspector received 35 parental questionnaires and spoke to 6 parents at the start of the school day. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Comments such as 'My child loves this school and is sad to be coming home' and 'school makes me feel very welcome' typify the responses on the questionnaires. Parents may wish to know that there were no trends in the very small number of criticisms offered in the questionnaires. Where the inspector agrees with issues raised in the parental questionnaires, this appears in the main body of the report.

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 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:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.



5th March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Delamere C of E Primary School. CW6 0ST

You may remember that I visited your school recently to carry out an inspection. Thank you for talking to me and sharing your views about your school. I listened to them carefully and this letter is to explain what I found.

I judged your school to be outstanding. It provides you with an excellent quality of education. Everyone who works in your school is dedicated to providing you with interesting opportunities so that you can achieve your very best.

Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is impressive. You are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors. I enjoyed the conversations we had over lunch and looking at the pictures of the special events days held at your school. You told me that you enjoy being part of a small school because it is like being in a big family. You explained that sometimes you fall out with friends, but you always make up and if you have a problem, your teachers will always listen and help. I noticed how well you look after each other at lunchtime, with older children helping the younger ones with their dinner trays. You know how to keep healthy and safe and enjoy taking part in sporting activities, even though because you are such a small school it is difficult to win age related competitions. The school council is active in raising money for the community and in improving the school play facilities. I know that they have good plans for activities to support Comic Relief!

You told me that your school has improved a lot since it was last inspected and I agree. Your headteacher and all the staff are determined to continue to improve the standards you achieve, particularly in English. They are going to introduce a handwriting scheme to make sure that your writing is presented really well. I hope that you will continue to help Mr Docking and your other teachers by always trying your very best and rising to every challenge. You have my very good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

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