

Saighton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111350
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	331091
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	85
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 John Davies-Colley
Headteacher	Mrs M Sellers
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Saighton Lane Saighton Chester Cheshire CH3 6EG
Telephone number	01244 335822

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a smaller than average primary school serving a number of rural parishes on the Duke of Westminster's estate, to the south of Chester. Families from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds send their children to the school, many from outside the school's designated catchment area. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those vulnerable to underachievement is broadly average.

The school has achieved the following national awards: Activemark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools Award, Qualitymark and Eco-School (Bronze).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school was placed in special measures in December 2007. There were significant weaknesses in pupils' progress and standards, especially in science and mathematics, in pupils' behaviour, and in the quality of teaching. Those responsible for leading and managing the school were not checking sufficiently on pupils' progress and did not demonstrate the capacity to put things right.

Under the leadership of a new headteacher, all of the above weaknesses are rectified. The school now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils with several good features and a strong capacity for further improvement. Pupils' standards have improved. They are good in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. For these pupils, this represents satisfactory achievement and they could do better. Many pupils, especially the younger ones, are now making good progress in lessons.

The school has a very good ethos. It is a very welcoming school. The staff are very caring and know all the children well. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils, especially for those who are vulnerable and/or at risk of underachievement. There have been many changes of teachers and teaching assistants over the past year but staff morale is strong. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, but the teaching has several good features. These include the quality of teachers' planning, marking and assessment of pupils' work, and the good quality of the contribution made by teaching assistants. Excluding Reception, each of the three classes contains children of two age groups. There is, therefore, a wide range of learning needs within each class. Making sure that teachers consistently meet the wide range of learning needs is the key to raising standards within the school and the main challenge it faces in doing so. The partnerships with parents and with external agencies are good. The school has the full confidence of parents. It is increasingly popular and many parents travel considerable distances to bring their children here. Children enjoy school and their personal development is good. Pupils like their teachers and the support staff and they get on well together. The older pupils look out for younger ones. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is focused, understandably, on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, where there were issues to deal with. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils and the school is gradually developing strengths in its curriculum, such as in singing, sport, the environment and in multimedia.

The school's recovery and its current good progress are the result of improvements in leadership and management at all levels. The work of the headteacher has been instrumental in putting the school back on its feet. She provides a strong direction for the school and has the confidence of governors, staff, pupils and parents. Governance is now good. Teachers and teaching assistants also provide sound leadership for subjects and aspects of the work of the school. The Diocese of Chester and the local authority have provided good support for the school over the past year. The school is managing a deficit budget sensibly and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage in the school comprises a single Reception class. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is one of the most improved areas within the

school. At the time of the last inspection, Reception children were taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Now, they have their own classroom with access to a secure outside area. The separation of the youngest children has enabled the school to provide a much more appropriate learning environment for children in Early Years Foundation Stage. Children from a range of pre-school settings settle well and enjoy school. The quality of provision is good. The classroom is well organised to provide children with experiences in all the areas of learning and they have free access to the outdoors on all but one day. The teacher ensures a smooth transition to Reception by developing good links with pre-school providers. She maintains thorough records of children's progress. Assessments show that children's progress is good across all areas. Children make a good start to early reading, writing and mathematics and parents are very well involved as true partners in their children's education. Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction about their children's start to school-life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further, particularly in mathematics and science, by ensuring that teaching consistently meets the wide range of learning needs within each class in Key Stages 1 and 2.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter school with a broad range of abilities, prior knowledge and understanding. Cohort sizes are small. Therefore, care is needed when interpreting the school's performance because each pupil represents a significant percentage of the total and there is significant variation in pupils' ability from one cohort to the next.

Overall, over the past three years, the standards of 11-year-olds have been broadly average, representing satisfactory progress for pupils. Last year, in 2008, the year after the school went into special measures, standards in English at 11 rose and about half of the Year 6 pupils achieved the highest level, Level 5. Standards in science were also higher, although standards in mathematics remained the same. Pupils in the current Year 6 are in line to reach standards that are average.

Work in pupils' books and teachers' assessment records show many children in the school are now making good progress and are meeting challenging targets. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. They benefit from teaching in small groups within the classes and through one-to-one support from teaching assistants who follow intervention programmes specifically chosen to meet the pupils' learning needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school. They are proud of their school and believe that it is getting better. The great majority of pupils have mature attitudes to learning and behave well. A very small minority of mainly older boys do not behave as well. The older pupils are the most affected by the school's past difficulties. Attendance is satisfactory, just above the average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

good. They learn to put others first and distinguish between right and wrong. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of what it means to lead a healthy life and they are keen about sport and eating healthily. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and they willingly take responsibility within class and around school to help with the smooth running of the school. Older pupils look after the younger ones and this reinforces the family feel of the school. The school is developing a strength in pupils' ecological awareness and pupils are enthusiastic recycling officers. Pupils are increasingly involved with village and church life. They are preparing well for the next phase of education but reaching and maintaining higher standards are necessary to secure better economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and from the evidence from documentation, pupils' books and from lessons, teaching has good features. These include good quality planning that involves differentiated work for different groups within each class, which take account of the levels of pupils' understanding rather than simply their age. Teachers' marking of work and their use of targets for pupils are good, although pupils do not often respond to the comments and suggestions teachers make. Teaching assistants play a very important role in teaching and learning within the school, teaching groups within lessons to help teachers cope effectively with the wide range of learning needs. Where this practice is well established, pupils make good progress, although the practice is not yet fully consistent. Behaviour is managed well in most classes and teachers' expectations are high. Rigorous tracking of progress identifies children who are falling behind in literacy and numeracy and they receive extra tuition from teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory: it is sufficiently broad, balanced and increasingly relevant to the pupils. The emphasis of children's work over the past year has been firmly on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, since raising standards in these subjects was the focus of the areas for improvement. Sufficient time is allocated to the pastoral curriculum to support pupils' personal development. Gradually, the school is developing pupils' interests in a broader range of subjects and aspects, which make learning more interesting and which motivate pupils. These include singing, sports, media (such as making films, radio programmes) and environmental sustainability. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided and these are very popular. They include before-school and lunchtime clubs, so that children who cannot stay behind after school are not disadvantaged. The Computer Club for Girls is one of these. Pupils have the opportunity to go on several residential visits in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. This is a supportive and caring school where all staff know each child. The ethos of the school is that of a caring family. The procedures to safeguard children meet the government's requirements. Policies and procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety and minimise risk are rigorously observed and monitored. Staff provide

good guidance for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with their work and also for their personal development. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, receive very good care. Strong links are maintained with parents and with other children's services. One of the main areas identified for the school to improve at the time of the last inspection was the monitoring of pupils' progress. This aspect of academic guidance is now thoroughly embedded in the practice of each teacher and rigorously monitored by the headteacher and subject leaders.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The improvement in leadership and management is responsible for the turn around in the school's performance and its very good ethos. Strong leadership has provided the school with a good capacity for further improvement. The new headteacher has proved very successful. The school has a clear sense of direction, the morale of staff is lifted and confidence in the school amongst parents is re-established. The work of the school is rigorously monitored. After a period where the school's development aims have been proscribed, a start has been made to self-evaluation by staff and governors. Teachers and teaching assistants are developing their leadership roles effectively; for example, a teaching assistant is leading on the school's work on environmental sustainability. The staff, as a whole, form a strong and cohesive team. The governing body is strengthened by the addition of new members and works efficiently in committees, providing increasing challenge and support for the headteacher. All statutory policies have been reviewed. The school is well organised and runs very smoothly.

The school has received good support from the local authority and from the Diocese to help it out of special measures. Both authorities recognise the progress made and have begun to reduce the level of support they provide. Apart from the need to manage a deficit budget, the school is in a strong position to improve further. It is already playing a much larger part in the local community and is developing exciting plans for the future. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily at school, locally and at a more global level through its charity work, but it recognises that as a largely mono-cultural institution, it should do more.

The school has good links with outside agencies that provide children's services and good links with the local network of schools. Links and communication with parents are good.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

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	3
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	3
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**

You may remember I visited your school recently to see how well you were learning. Thank you to all of the pupils who talked to me during the inspection. What you told me helped me to come to my judgements.

Just over a year ago, in December 2007, an Ofsted inspector decided that you were not learning well enough and left the school with a number of areas to improve to make things right. I am pleased to report to you that everything that the school needed to do has now been achieved. Your school now provides you with a satisfactory education. It is well on its way to being a good school.

I first visited your school in April 2008. It is a lot better now than it was then. Your new headteacher, Mrs Sellers, has done a very good job of improving the school and getting it back on track. She has been supported well by the teachers, teaching assistants, governors and the local and church authorities. When I first visited, I saw several pupils who were not trying hard enough in lessons. Now I see very few pupils who are not trying and I see lots of you who are helping each other and doing much better with your work. I can see that you enjoy your school life. You have many opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge: in singing and sport, for example, and in making films and in looking after the environment. The youngest children, in the Reception class, now have a much better start to school in their new classroom with its outdoor play area.

The next target for the school to reach in order for it to become a truly good school is for all of you to achieve your best and reach the highest standards you are capable of. Mrs Sellers and the staff know you can do better. They are determined to make their teaching really effective and your lessons even more exciting. For your part, you must make sure your attendance, behaviour and attitudes are always the best you can manage. I look forward to reading about your progress.