

# Dee Point Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111218
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	337643
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Byrne

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Dave Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Blacon Point Road Blacon Chester CH1 5NF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. One focused solely on the quality of safeguarding. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the assessment records, a sample of pupils' work, the school development plan and a range of required school policies. The views of parents were considered by analysing the questionnaires received. The views of pupils and staff were also evaluated by examining their questionnaires.

- the quality of teaching and learning to establish whether or not it is effective enough to justify the outcomes reported by the school
- the contribution made by the curriculum to the academic and personal development of pupils
- the quality of the school's provision for pupils with challenging needs and the school's contribution to cohesion within the community.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Almost half of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Many of these pupils have considerable learning difficulties and a significant number of them have emotional and/or behavioural problems. The vast majority of pupils are of White British ethnicity with very few from other ethnic backgrounds. The school is gaining in popularity which is reflected in an above average proportion of pupils joining the school at times other than the normal. The school is part of the Blacon Educational Village involving close collaboration with nearby schools. The school has gained many awards in recognition of aspects of its work. These are the Kite Mark for Inclusion, the Healthy Schools Award, the Active Mark for outstanding provision in physical education and the Eco Bronze award for its work promoting environmental awareness amongst pupils.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school which makes a significant difference to the life chances of pupils and their families. The quality of education has improved rapidly since the last inspection as a result of inspired leadership and management, an innovative curriculum and the dedication of a talented teaching team. It is a long way down the road to achieving its mission of being a 'Vibrant, ambitious community enriching children's lives and laying the foundations for lifelong learning'.

Pupils love coming to school. The outstanding and innovative curriculum provides a wide menu of exciting, stimulating and inspiring activities. Pupils can not wait to get into lessons to see 'what I am going to learn next'. As a result, pupils make excellent progress and achieve well, overcoming the barriers to learning many of them have. By the age of 11, the large majority have caught up and attainment is average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do exceptionally well. The small minority of more-able pupils, whilst making good progress, could do even better. Although swift actions by the school are lifting attainment, a weakness in writing remains.

The school is a place of calm and tranquillity reflecting the pupils' outstanding behaviour. Staff respect pupils, pupils respect each other and everyone gets on very well together. As many parents said, the school is like a large family. But no-one gets away with slacking, hard work is the norm. This is a school where everyone is working and playing hard, skilfully managed by good teachers and support staff. A feature of a Dee Point pupil is their politeness and confidence and their ability to have a go at new things without fear of failure. The pupils' voice is highly valued and influences much of what goes on in school contributing to the development of good citizens of the future.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The view of one pupil typifies the views of everyone connected with Dee Point when he said that the headteacher is 'the heartbeat of the school'. The excellent track record of improvement illustrates well the senior leadership team's ambition and drive. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and has shown it takes effective action to tackle weaknesses. It has outstanding capacity to improve further.

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

- Raise attainment further by:
  - ensuring more able pupils are always suitably challenged
  - strengthening pupils' confidence and ability in writing.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy lessons. They work hard and take pride in their achievements. Pupils' attainment has improved and is now broadly average. However, standards in writing are lower than those in reading and mathematics. In 2009, there was a marked improvement in attainment. Pupils' current work shows this improvement is being sustained. The large majority of pupils are working at a level matching their age and/or ability.

Achievement is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Despite some considerable barriers to learning, current work and other data indicates that attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. This represents excellent progress from the low starting points of many children when starting school. The improvement in the quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has triggered improvement in the rate of progress moving through the school. This is reflected in average attainment at Year 2 in 2009. The enthusiasm for learning is evident in all that the pupils do and is a key factor in the immense acceleration in progress that has occurred in recent years. The school is taking effective steps to raise attainment in writing though it is early days as yet. Pupils reach and often exceed the challenging targets set for them. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress towards the targets in their personal education plans. The more-able make good progress but there is scope for them to be challenged even more.

Everyone from staff to pupils has high aspirations which are reflected in all that they do. Pupils increasingly set their own high standard, and whether they have special educational needs and/or disabilities or not, aim to do their best. This is typified in the mostly good quality of work recorded in their books. They work very hard and rarely show disaffection or lack of interest. Their own interests are often recognised and therefore, learning is relevant.

Pupils respond very well to the school ethos that values each as an individual; this is an important factor in their outstanding behaviour overall. Pupils are aware of how to treat others. They understand that some of their classmates struggle to fit in and so they help them. Pupils respond very positively to high expectations for them to think and act for themselves. This contributes to good levels of maturity amongst pupils. The many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as school councillors, Eco-Warriors or Max Agents (helping others during playtime) contribute to the pupils' strong sense of self-worth. Pupils say they feel safe and secure at all times and any incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with swiftly and fairly by staff. Pupils know what they need to do to stay healthy and they enjoy physical activity, making full use of the extensive play and climbing facilities outside. Sporting activities have a very good uptake amongst pupils and the Wake and Shake activities held before school and at lunchtimes are very popular. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. They develop advanced social skills, know how to treat others and have many opportunities to use their imaginations in a creative and spiritual way. Pupils have a good sense of their own culture and value the diversity of the mix of cultures which are present in the school and

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their local community. The attendance is steadily improving and is currently average. The upturn is because of the school's sterling efforts to make learning fun and strategies such as providing rewards for good attendance including a chance to win a bicycle!

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

At the heart of this school is its outstanding quality of care, guidance and support. Pupils feel safe and secure and this contributes to their personal and academic development. Every pupil is valued and treated equally. Pupils have complete faith in the adults in the school and know that if they are upset about anything, support is forthcoming. Staff do not judge pupils, but get to know them very well and draw upon a range of excellent strategies to support them. Particularly impressive is the contribution of the learning mentor to the partnerships between the school and parents. These have a very positive impact on the pupils' academic development and their attendance. Parents feel that they are very much part of the school. They feel welcomed, appreciate the good quality of information they receive and value the help their children and also themselves get when in need of emotional support. Very effective links with external agencies for example

<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.

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speech therapists and the local Children's Centre makes a very good contribution to helping pupils struggling emotionally and/or academically.

The quality of teaching is consistently good with much that is outstanding. Excellent relationships between all staff and pupils produce a very positive climate for learning. Classrooms are happy and purposeful places. Teachers are very effective in imaginatively teaching the basic skills. For example, in a letters and sounds session, linked to reading, pupils were skilfully led into answering the question 'Does the 'e' vanish when adding – 'ing'?' The pupils responded very positively to very clear guidance and high expectations, which was tailored to their needs and abilities. In numeracy, much is done to make lessons practical and fun. The teaching of writing has improved greatly since the innovations to the curriculum. Pupils are given good quality guidance about how to structure writing, and how to engage to the reader. For example, they are taught to use 'wow' words and to use punctuation imaginatively as well as accurately. Teaching benefits from an outstanding and innovative curriculum which provides interesting topics that make sense of the world for pupils. Lessons are typically relevant to pupils' own lives and interests. This motivates all pupils, and in particular boys, to write. One boy was overheard in a lesson to say, 'Do I have to stop writing?' – a sure sign of success! However, these measures have yet to have full impact on the overall quality of pupils' writing.

In addition to teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, outstanding teaching occurs in art where a specialist provides very high quality lessons linking art to the class topics. The products of these lessons festoon the corridors and classrooms making the school visually bright and a highly stimulating place to be. Sport, music, drama and humanities are all taught well. Imaginative approaches that link practical work with drama and investigational work successfully make lessons fun. Teachers set high standards. Whilst fun is important, quality work, for example, in the pupils' books, is also expected. A good balance is struck between enjoyment and developing basic skills in each class.

The quality of assessment is excellent in English and mathematics. Most pupils are developing a mature and reflective view of their own progress, but guidance towards their next steps in learning is not consistently spelt out or monitored. Assessment is outstanding in identifying at an early stage pupils who need additional support. It triggers the implementation of excellent strategies for supporting them. By working very closely with very effective teaching assistants, teachers ensure that all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in all lessons and activities. More-able pupils, although well taught, are not always challenged as much as they should be.

Decisions made about what is taught, through the curriculum are brave and innovative. They are justified by the positive results in terms of pupils' rapidly increasing progress and rising attainment. The needs of Dee Point pupils drive planning so that lessons are relevant and meaningful to them. Much very effective learning is carried out outside the classroom. Each year group from Year 1 upwards has the opportunity to benefit from a residential visit. Links with other schools broaden pupils understanding of others

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different from themselves. Many opportunities to participate in sport and interschool events help pupils to gain confidence and a healthy sense of competitiveness. An unusually wide range of extra-curricular activities are very well attended and popular with pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school's innovative approach to the curriculum is just one example of the successful ways in which the leadership team drive improvement. A high quality team has been created involving staff, pupils and parents; everyone is pulling together in the same direction. High standards are set in everything from the appointment of staff, to the quality of classroom and school displays to the strategies for making learning fun. The school knows itself very well and has very well thought through strategies for making it better. The success of this is clear in the improvements that have occurred since the last inspection. The governing body effectively plays its part in monitoring the school's performance and making sure that it is on track to give the best to its pupils. All spending is very carefully considered so that it gets the best possible value for money. All statutory requirements are met and procedures for safeguarding are outstanding. All procedures are excellently maintained and involve listening to the views of all involved in the school including parents and pupils. The school's work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are evident in the diligence of staff in ensuring the participation in school life of all groups of pupils, particularly of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Parents feel very much part of the school. After a period when the school lost popularity, this has now reversed and there is a growing reputation amongst parents which is reflected by its increasing numbers. Staff do a great deal to support pupils and to keep parents informed about their children's progress and ways of supporting them at home, for example, with reading through the Family Literacy sessions. The way in which the school supports parents in the community and links with other schools both locally and regionally, makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The school is very much at the hub of many initiatives to support parents and families in the community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Recent improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) give children an excellent start to their school life. Teaching is outstanding in the Reception class and good in Nursery. Strong partnerships with parents and carers extend learning to the home which helps children very much. Parents are welcome into school each day. Great care is taken by staff to maintain the highest standard of health and safety and attention to hygiene is paramount with children.

Achievement has increased significantly in the last two years. Children start school with levels of development that are low for their age. An above average proportion of children have difficulties with speech and language which makes learning in many areas very difficult. As a result of excellent teaching, however, children make very rapid progress. By the time they leave Reception, the large majority have reached the levels expected for their age although aspects of language remain below overall.

The staff are a very talented team. Imaginative planning and a creative approach to resources make the Early Years Foundation Stage a fun place to be. Outdoor learning is very much part of the provision. Children love following their sounds and letters trail seeking spiders with letters on their backs 'hidden' in the outdoor area; planting seeds from a pomegranate explored during an adult led activity or being one of the lucky ones being allowed to play in the real car!

Staff get to know each child very well using a combination of observations and assessments and use this information to guide and direct support where it is needed. A combination of child directed and adult led activities successfully meet the children's learning needs. It results in children developing very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Each child makes excellent progress in terms of their

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self-confidence and ability to collaborate and work with others. They also make excellent progress in their physical and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed extremely well. Resources are very well deployed and the impact of the planned curriculum is carefully monitored.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

The table below shows that parents have a very positive view of the school. Parents and carers were virtually unanimous in their support of the school, its improvement in recent years and the quality of its care and education provided by the school. These positive views were reiterated by parents and carers who talked to the inspectors.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dee Point Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	72	30	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	71	31	26	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	55	48	40	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	55	52	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	65	38	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	61	42	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	60	46	39	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	69	58	47	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	56	48	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	60	40	34	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	68	57	47	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	88	74	28	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	71	32	27	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19th October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dee Point Primary School, Blacon, Chester CH1 5NF

I have many lasting memories of my visit to your school the other day; of your friendliness, of the way you love your lessons and of the way you welcomed my colleagues and I to your school. It is rare to be in a school as good as yours. It is outstanding. It was a delight to see how much you enjoyed learning, the way you take pride in all that you do and the way you treat others with respect and care. Walking around the corridors and visiting classrooms was a pleasure; at all times the school is peaceful. Your teachers work very hard to make your lessons enjoyable. Indeed, learning should be fun! Your parents/carers are also positive about how well the school supports them too.

Your school is extremely caring. It makes sure that all of you, including those who find learning difficult, are taught very well and made to feel part of the family that is Dee Point. As a result, your attainment is rising and is now close to average. This gives you a great spring board for when you move onto secondary school. Equally important are the attitudes you develop. Your sense of safety is second to none and it is encouraging that you value the importance of exercise and healthy eating. These things are very important for you to be happy people in the future. Although your school gives you an outstanding education there are some things that would make it even better. This is what I have asked your teachers to do next:

- find ways of making work even more challenging for those of you who find work easy
- help you become more confident and better writers.

I wish you all the very best for your futures and hope you all have dreams that you aim for and achieve.

Yours sincerely,

Mr David Byrne

Lead inspector

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