

Puss Bank School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132807
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	341347
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr David Neilson
Headteacher	Mr CA Hutchings
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed 18 teachers in their classrooms; approximately half of inspection time was spent looking at learning, including time spent looking at pupils' work. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a group of parents. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including data about pupils' progress and attainment; the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records. They reviewed information provided by parents in 105 completed questionnaires. They also took into account the views pupils and staff expressed in their questionnaires.

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

- the progress pupils made during the last school year and how well they are progressing in the current year
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in building pupils' skills year on year, helping to ensure that good standards are sustained
- the impact of leadership and management on achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils
- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development.

Information about the school

This large school serves a residential area of mixed housing. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school is resourced by its local authority to provide seven places for pupils with autism. Further resourced provisions that were in place at the time of the last inspection were closed in 2007, following a local and national review of resources for pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties. Most pupils are White British, with a very small proportion from other heritages. The school provides wraparound care before and after school each day and extended lunchtime care in the nursery class.

The school holds the Activemark, the Healthy Schools Award, the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Silver Eco Schools Award and the Silver Artsmark and Financial Management Standard in Schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school has built successfully on the key strengths identified at its last inspection and now provides a good standard of education for its pupils, with outstanding provision for their care, guidance and support. Well-led, effective practitioners work together to ensure that teaching methods and the curriculum are responsive to pupils' needs and interests. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning activities, apply themselves well and make good progress.

Pupils progress well through the school, from their average starting points on entry. Standards have risen from below to above average over the past three years. The curriculum builds effectively on the successful learning that takes place in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good teaching is underpinned by the effective use of assessment. The quality of provision is evaluated rigorously. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations of them and are becoming increasingly confident learners. Very careful consideration is given to pupils' welfare. Well-organised resourced provision enables a small number of pupils with autism to access mainstream education alongside their peers, with additional support matched effectively to their individual requirements in the school's inclusive setting.

Well-organised extended provision is greatly appreciated by pupils and parents and represents an effective and flexible response to the needs of families. A programme of improvements to the accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage has begun, with the reorganisation of the outdoor area. Further work is needed to enable the quality of the outdoor curriculum to support the best possible learning outcomes for the children.

The effective headteacher has created a strong team ethos, with a clear focus on school improvement. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, based on rigorous and systematic monitoring and review. The school sets challenging and ambitious improvement targets, although those concerning raising attainment are not spelt out in sufficient detail in the otherwise well-constructed school development plan. Staff and governors are involved through the year in reviewing how well the school is doing. All of this, together with the skills and talents of staff and leaders, means that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the success criteria for actions aimed at raising attainment are set out clearly and precisely in the school development plan, so that all stakeholders are fully informed about the improvements the school is aiming for during the year.

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- Implement plans for further improvements to the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in order to ensure that the curriculum provides children with rich opportunities for learning through investigative and adventurous play outside.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils concentrate well and make good progress in lessons, showing interest and enthusiasm. They use information and communication technology equipment with growing assurance. They work well with a partner or in groups and this is helping them to develop and offer their ideas readily. Both their responses in lessons and the work in their books indicate good attainment and progress. Attainment has risen rapidly over the past three years to the point where standards are above average. The school's tracking information shows that pupils in all year groups made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics during the last school year and that this continues to be the picture in the current year.

Pupils show good awareness of issues around personal safety. They have a detailed understanding of the factors that contribute to healthy living and can discuss these confidently. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example as school councillors, eco officers and play leaders. They form good relationships with each other and with the adults in school and they say they are confident that help is on hand if they encounter any problems. Their good basic skills and good study and concentration skills mean that they are well prepared for the future. They show an excellent understanding of the sound moral values the school promotes, reflected in their outstandingly good behaviour and considerate attitudes. They consider and discuss serious issues very thoughtfully in assemblies and in lessons and they are active fund-raisers for local, national and international charitable causes. The curriculum is helping them to develop an increased understanding of cultures beyond their own direct experience. Attendance is good and the school ensures that pupils at risk of poor attendance are identified and supported.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

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

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	
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching, with some outstanding practice, contributes well to pupils' learning and progress and to their personal development. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations for effort and behaviour in lessons. Lessons are planned well to take the range of learners' needs into account. The pace of learning is brisk, the level of challenge is good, and teachers use questioning well to extend pupils' thinking. Teachers ensure that pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to do and to achieve. They use target-setting and marking well to point pupils to the next steps in learning and to advise them about how to improve their work. Regular assessment ensures a good overview of how well pupils are doing. Well trained teaching assistants make an effective contribution to the learning and progress of those pupils who have additional needs.

The curriculum is planned well to reflect pupils' interests and this ensures they are engaged fully. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their basic skills through work across the areas of learning and this contributes well to raising attainment. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports, the performing arts, information and communication technology, and a modern foreign language. Further enhancement is provided by visiting specialists, themed events and visits to places of interest, including residential trips for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Well planned provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they enjoy full access to learning and social inclusion. Pastoral care is excellent and the school works very sensitively to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This is helping to break down barriers to learning and progress that some pupils encounter. Regular progress reviews help to identify pupils who are underachieving, ensuring they are given the support they need. The school promotes good attendance effectively. The popular breakfast club gets the day off to a happy start and after-school provision includes a wide range of well-attended clubs and activities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2

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

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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?

Governors and staff at all levels wholeheartedly share the headteacher's clear vision and resolve to take the school forward and to achieve the best possible outcomes for its pupils. The supportive governing body is an effective critical friend to the school. Senior staff and subject leaders play an active role in planning for improvement and in assuring the quality of provision, and this contributes well to school improvement. Leaders know their school well. Rigorous monitoring systems help to assure the good quality of teaching and the curriculum. The information gained from monitoring and review is used well to help leaders set the ambitious improvement targets which are described in the school development plan. In planning actions aimed at raising attainment, however, the school does not set out its success criteria in sufficient detail. This means that they are not communicated clearly enough to all stakeholders. Parents' very positive views of the school reflect good home–school partnerships, supported by regular communications, including the school's website. The school complies well with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection through well managed procedures and through ongoing review of their effectiveness. Its inclusive ethos promotes equality of opportunity and access to educational entitlement effectively. The school's extended provision is well organised, popular with pupils and valued by parents. The school contributes successfully to community cohesion through a very wide range of partnerships in its community, including the important role it plays in its local Educational Improvement Partnership and its very close links with the high school. The school also works effectively with a range of agencies that support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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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 enter the Nursery class with skills that are broadly at the expected levels for their age. They make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception year most children achieve the learning goals expected for the age group and many exceed them. Children do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development; they gain very positive attitudes and become happy, interested learners. The quality of teaching is good. There is a good balance of activities chosen by the children and those led by adults, and children are thereby supported well in developing the skills that lead to independence. Effective assessment is supported by a wide range of evidence gathered through observations of the children in their activities. Staff use this well to plan the next steps in learning, to meet their individual needs and to ensure that activities reflect the children's interests. Although an attractive outdoor area has been created, the outdoor curriculum is currently only satisfactory and the school is aware that more needs to be done to enhance the area's capacity to enable investigative and adventurous learning to take place through outdoor play. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff; as a result, they grow in confidence, they are happy and secure and ready to learn. They settle quickly because induction procedures are sensitive. The setting is well led and managed and the staff team work together well. Provision is monitored regularly and this supports ongoing improvements. Procedures to ensure children's welfare are very good and meet all requirements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Around one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of those who responded said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the school's good overall effectiveness.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Puss Bank 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 inspection team received 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 355 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	57	37	38	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	61	62	36	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	34	61	62	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	40	52	53	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	41	42	53	54	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	42	50	51	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	38	54	55	3	3	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)	48	49	41	42	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	40	54	55	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	40	48	49	6	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	30	58	59	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	32	57	58	1	1	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	48	48	49	1	1	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



4 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Puss Bank School, Macclesfield SK10 1QJ

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school.

As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. You told us how much you enjoy school and we agree with you that Puss Bank is a good school. These are some of the good things we found out about it.

Your school is a happy place of learning and you are extremely well behaved and polite young people. You work hard in your lessons, you enjoy your work and you get on well with each other and with the adults in school. The Early Years Foundation Stage gets your education off to a good start and the school gives you a good standard of education. You are given good teaching and interesting lessons and the grown-ups in school look after you extremely well. You are making good progress in your learning, with Puss Bank pupils now reaching above average standards at the end of Year 6. Well done. Keep up the good work!

There is still some work to be done to make Puss Bank the best school it can possibly be. These are the things I have asked the headteacher, the staff and the governors to do:

- set out, in the big plan that they make each year, exactly how much improvement they hope to achieve in the standards Puss Bank pupils reach. This is so that everyone in the school will know what the school is aiming for
- carry on making improvements to the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that it can be used to give children more opportunities to learn through adventures and investigations out of doors.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Diane Auton

Lead inspector

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