

Audlem St James' CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111267
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	356885
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2010
Reporting inspector	John Dunne

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hilary Serif
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Nolan-Burnitt
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2007
School address	Heathfield Road Audlem Crewe CW3 0HH
Telephone number	01270 685120
Fax number	01270 812314
Email address	head@audlemstjamesce.school.cheshire.org.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by 10 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and held discussions with members of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including data about pupils' progress, records of monitoring, school policies and improvement plans. Inspectors looked at safeguarding arrangements and the 56 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 79 returned by pupils.

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

- Whether governors, leaders and managers have been effective in securing improved attainment for all pupils throughout the school.
- Whether governors, leaders and managers at all levels have been effective in improving the quality of teaching.
- How effective the school has been in eliminating differences between the attainment and progress of boys and girls.
- The extent to which actions taken by the school are enabling middle leaders to effectively contribute to sustainable improvements in attainment.

Information about the school

Audlem St James is a slightly smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, as is the proportion of those speaking English as an additional language. A below average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities but the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs is above average.

The school experienced significant staffing turbulence during the last academic year with an acting headteacher leading the school for four months in 2010. The majority of the governing body are very recently appointed. The school has Healthy School and Fair Trade School status and has received a number of awards including: Inclusion Quality Mark, Activemark, Investors in People status, ECO School Award, Artsmark Silver and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Some pupils attend the before- and after-school care facility. This was not inspected on this inspection and a separate report is published on the Ofsted website

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Since the last inspection, attainment from 2007 to 2009 showed little sign of improvement. During the last academic year, there were significant interruptions to staffing at senior level with an acting headteacher in post during most of 2010. During this period of instability, the effective work of the acting headteacher ensured a clear focus on the need to raise standards and to accelerate pupils' progress, while continuing to build on the school's strengths in maintaining very high attendance, good behaviour and a positive climate for learning. Robust actions to improve the quality of teaching based upon accurate self-evaluation, well supported by the local authority, have been effective in raising attainment. As a result, although standards remain broadly average, the 2010 test results showed improvement in both key stages. However, weaknesses remain in the attainment of average ability pupils in Key Stage 2, in boys' writing and of more-able pupils in reading in Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and the gap has narrowed between the attainment of boys and girls. Inspection evidence shows that these improvements are being maintained. This recently improving picture demonstrates the school now has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but the monitoring of teaching and learning by leaders at all levels is not yet rigorous enough to ensure consistency. Not all teachers use assessments effectively enough to inform planning, nor to set work that is sufficiently challenging for pupils of all abilities. Some teachers spend too long talking, which limits pupils' opportunities to discuss their work and at times, this inhibits learning. Despite these factors, the quality of teaching has improved and much good teaching was seen during the inspection. The school is a harmonious community where pupils work and play together happily regardless of background and pupils enjoy coming to school.

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is inadequate. A significant number of parents and carers expressed concerns about a number of aspects of the school, but particularly, the effectiveness of leaders and managers and ineffective communication between the school and families.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall, but teachers do not have a secure picture about children's attainment when they join Reception. Due to recent staffing changes, the very committed staff who have responsibility for leading the Early Years Foundation Stage are unclear about some aspects of their roles and responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to above average and accelerate pupils' progress, by:

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- ensuring that average ability pupils in Key Stage 2 are sufficiently supported and effectively challenged to make good progress
- improving boys' writing and more-able pupils' reading in Key Stage 1, by ensuring they are sufficiently challenged
- ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to speak and listen in lessons.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make more effective use of assessment to inform pupils' next steps in learning
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations and set aspirational targets which challenge every pupil.
- Enable leaders and managers at all levels to be more effective in driving improvement, by:
 - increasing the rigour of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
 - involving middle leaders more in checking on the school's performance.
- Improve children's outcomes to good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - gaining a secure picture of the attainment of children entering Reception so that appropriately challenging tasks can be set
 - ensuring that those leading and managing the Early Years Foundation Stage have greater clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities.
- At the most senior level, for the school to engage more closely and positively with parents and carers and to take more account and act upon their suggestions and concerns.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy working in groups and treat each other with respect. They are keen to learn and enjoy volunteering answers. Pupils enjoy working hard but when tasks are either too difficult or too easy their interest wanes and progress slows. Pupils enter reception with a range of skills, but overall are broadly in line with those expected. Most pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Where teaching is less challenging, particular groups of pupils, including the more-able, do not make enough progress. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. For the majority of the pupils' their achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory.

Most pupils feel safe and say bullying is not an issue. They are confident that adults effectively deal with any issues that worry them. Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is good and at times very good. Pupils readily recognise dangerous situations.

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They explain the benefits of exercise and healthy eating and many take part in the wide range of opportunities for physical activity. Pupils engage well with the local community. In lessons, when given the opportunity, pupils collaborate well and sensibly work independently. However, despite their confident social skills and high attendance, pupils' average attainment means that they are only satisfactorily prepared for their future. Pupils have a good moral understanding in the way in which they show consideration for others and demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong. They have a good understanding of the traditions and cultures of people from different backgrounds and religions because of opportunities to engage with communities, which differ from their locality.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving. In many lessons, good teaching effectively challenges pupils and enables them to share ideas and to develop their skills at a good pace. However, in other lessons teaching is not as well matched to pupils' interests and abilities. This is because some teachers' expectations are not high enough and they do

¹ 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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not make effective use of assessments to plan sufficiently challenging tasks for all. In others, teachers spend too long directing the lesson, pupils do not spend long enough talking about and being involved in their work and consequently, learning slows. Teachers' marking is sometimes good, giving pupils clear indicators for their next steps in learning. However, this is not evident in some classes and too often marking does not clearly guide pupils as to how they can improve their work.

The curriculum was reviewed recently to enable common themes to link subjects together to promote improvements in pupils' basic skills, particularly reading and writing. This is beginning to be successful in promoting literacy in Key Stage 2. However, this is not embedded and has not yet demonstrated a positive impact in raising attainment over a sustained period. Some aspects of the curriculum have had positive effects, including the good range of extra-curricular enrichment opportunities, and these help pupils to enjoy their time at school.

This is a caring school. However, systems for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are at an early stage of development and are not yet demonstrating a sustained impact on pupils' outcomes. Good arrangements for transition ensure pupils are confident when they join the school, enter different key stages or move on to secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Test results over recent years have remained stubbornly below expectation. In 2010, the school faced the added challenge of instability in staffing at the most senior level. The overwhelming majority of staff rose to meet this challenge and improvements started to take place. Teachers, leaders and managers collaborated and welcomed increased levels of accountability and the effective support from the local authority. This resulted in a committed team, motivated to embed ambition for further improvement. As a result, attainment rose in 2010 at the end of both key stages. The school now has accurate self-evaluation and a clear plan as to what needs to be done to sustain this improvement. Although these systems are not yet fully embedded, they show clearly that the effectiveness with which leaders and managers communicate ambition and drive improvement is satisfactory.

Governance is satisfactory. Although many governors have only very recently been appointed, they have gained a clear understanding of what needs to be done and

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acquired many of the skills needed in a very short time. The governing body is demonstrating a will to provide robust challenge and support to the school. It is investing much time in engaging with parents and carers to improve relationships between them and the school. The full impact of this is yet to be seen because a significant minority of parents and carers still lack confidence in the school's willingness to take note and act upon their suggestions and concerns. This means that currently the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is inadequate.

Systems to monitor teaching and learning are in place and show some impact, for example, in improvements in teaching. Middle leaders are currently insufficiently involved in checking on the school's performance. Sound procedures are in place to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination. The school is improving the systems to gain information about the progress of different groups of pupils. There is some evidence of improvement in areas where the school has targeted its actions, for example, in raising girls' attainment in science in order to bring it in to line with that of boys. Safeguarding procedures are good. Statutory requirements are fully met. The school assesses risks carefully and has very effective systems for ensuring the safeguarding of vulnerable pupils. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Whilst a harmonious school community is evident and the pupils are involved in the local community, opportunities for pupils to explore other cultures and global issues are at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There have been recent and significant changes in staffing and although roles and

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responsibilities are not yet totally clear, there is a clear ambition to secure improvements. Satisfactory leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are enabling children to make satisfactory progress in all aspects of their learning. Assessments of children's skills when they enter reception lack precision, but indicate a wide range, with some above expectations. Overall, however, children's skills on entry are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They enter Year 1 with average attainment, indicating their satisfactory progress through this key stage. Children behave well and willingly join in activities they have chosen or those led by an adult. There are positive relationships between staff and children. School routines and expectations are made clear. Social skills are very well developed and children learn how to take turns and how to play with, rather than alongside, others. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for children to make their own decisions and choose activities with a sound balance between those that are adult-led and those that are child-led. Adult support for children's welfare is good. Children work and play in a safe environment. They are known well as individuals.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Approximately half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and a number contacted inspectors during the inspection. A wide range of contrasting views were expressed in a number of aspects of the school's work, including many positive comments. From questionnaires, more than a third of parents and carers expressed the view that the school is not well led and managed. Many of these and all of those who made direct contact with inspectors described ineffective communication between school and families. Recent improvements led the inspection team to judge that the leadership of the school is satisfactory. A significant minority of parents and carers also expressed the opinion that the school did not take sufficient account of their views, suggestions or concerns. Inspectors followed up these concerns by speaking with a number of parents and carers and the headteacher.

The school's own view, endorsed by inspectors, is that it has lost the trust of a number of parents and carers because they have little confidence in its willingness to act on their views or follow up their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Audlem St James' CofE 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 inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 169 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	68	15	27	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	50	28	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	27	29	52	7	13	3	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	25	25	45	14	25	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	19	34	21	38	9	16	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	30	22	39	9	16	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	46	23	41	7	13	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)	20	36	28	50	3	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	39	17	30	12	21	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	32	24	43	11	20	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	29	25	45	10	18	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	11	20	23	41	6	11	12	21
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	39	19	34	9	16	4	7

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



22 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Audlem St James' CofE Primary School, Crewe, CW3 0HH

Inspection of Audlem St James' CofE Primary School, Crewe, CW3 0HH

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school. Many of you were keen to talk about your school. What you said helped us greatly in reaching our judgements.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Nearly all of you said you feel safe in school and feel confident that adults will help you if you have a problem. It was very pleasing to see how well you all get on together and how well you behave in lessons and around school – well done! Your attendance is much higher than most schools and so clearly you enjoy coming to school. You are growing up to be polite, sensible self confident young people. Your teachers put on a lot of extra activities for you and you appreciate this. They also do well to teach you about how to stay healthy. However, school is also about doing well in your learning and making good progress. This is where your school could help many of you to do better. In order to make this happen, I am asking your school to do the following things.

- To make sure that everyone gets challenging work so you can all make good progress.
- Reduce the amount of time spent by some teachers in talking to you and give you more chances to discuss your work.
- Make sure that all teachers mark your work accurately and give you better information as to how you can improve.
- Involve more people to check on teaching more often.
- Listen more to what your parents and carers think and to take actions about some of the things they say.

I wish you all the best for your future!

Yours sincerely,

John Dunne

Lead Inspector

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