



Sandbach Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111037
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278578
Inspection dates 21 November 2005 to 22 November 2005
Reporting inspector Joyce Taylor CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crewe Road
School category	Community		Sandbach
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Cheshire CW11 4NS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 763 701
Number on roll	172	Fax number	01270 798 188
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Neil Burrow
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2004	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Broadley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Sandbach Community Primary School is smaller than average. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. A small number have statements of special educational need. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic heritages. There is a higher than average proportion of children who moved to the school from other schools or who take long absences. The school has strong community links and recently won a countywide debating competition.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with many strengths. In three years it has moved from special measures to a good school because of the hard work of its teachers, pupils and the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy. Standards have improved and are now average overall, although in mathematics they slipped to below average in the Year 6 national tests in May 2005. At the same time, standards in science improved to above average. Effective teaching helps the children make good progress from low starting points, however, due to several recent changes in staff, progress in writing in Year 2 is not as good as it should be. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, although not all of the children reach the expected standards by the time they leave Reception.

Pupils enjoy school very much; they work hard and behave well in response to the good standard of care and support they receive. The curriculum is satisfactory and is extended effectively by a wide range of after school clubs and links with other schools and the community. The school has made great strides since the last inspection. School leaders and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to further improve the school. Their evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- ensuring children make appropriate progress in writing in Year 2
- improving standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6
- extending the curriculum to link subjects in a way that increases the pupils' interest and understanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average and achievement is good. When children start in the nursery their standards are below those expected for children of this age and, for many, well below average in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their achievement is good as many reach the expected levels in several aspects of their learning by the time they leave Reception. In Years 1 and 2 progress has been erratic but now Year 1 are making good progress. Last year, Year 2 made excellent progress, reaching standards that were average and above in the national tests for seven year olds. Disruptions to staffing have reversed the situation this year and although the Year 2 children made a good start, they have not done as well as they should for the past few weeks. The school has identified the problems and is dealing with them. In Years 3 to 6, pupils progress well and detailed assessments show where strengths and weaknesses in learning occur. Weaknesses are quickly tackled, for example, in science which had been a cause for concern 12 months ago

but is now a strength. Mathematics has been less successful and a number of Year 6 children, who should have reached average standards in their 2004 and 2005 tests, fell behind. The school assessments revealed the causes and steps have been taken to ensure the problem does not recur. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do as well as others due to some outstanding literacy support. The school met most of its targets set for 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Many pupils' personal development is below average when they arrive in the school and they develop into confident, caring and thoughtful young people with the essential social skills they will need in later life. Older pupils do much to support younger children and say that bullying is rare because of the 'buddy' system and because, as they say, 'our teachers are very kind and look after us.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council works hard to represent the views of the pupils and was instrumental in establishing the adventure playground. Provision in the Foundation Stage is equally impressive and children are encouraged to take responsibility for completing their tasks when not formally supervised. The children appreciate the healthy food options available in the canteen. Behaviour is good and often excellent. Pupils move around school in a mature fashion, arriving in the morning keen and eager to learn. Attendance is broadly average and there is a wide variety of effective strategies to improve it. Parents agree that their children love coming to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and there are some examples of outstanding practice when learners are taught on a one-to-one basis. High expectations, challenging questions and methods to meet individual learning needs are the key features of the good teaching. For example, pupils in Year 6 were captivated by the lesson on the context of John Lennon's song Imagine and spoke with confidence about its meaning in relation to the Vietnam War. Classroom management is generally good and teachers treat their pupils with respect and dignity. On the rare occasions when effective challenge is not present and when pupils are not encouraged to think for themselves, pace drops and achievement suffers, for example, in Year 2 writing. Assessment procedures are good and teachers track pupils' performance closely. As a result a dip in underperformance of some pupils in Year 6 was identified in time for teachers to take steps to redress the situation. The school is refining its monitoring and using the information to set individual targets for literacy and numeracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which meets the needs of the pupils. It is strongly supported by a good range of after school clubs and additional learning opportunities through involvement with other schools and the wider community. These enable pupils to demonstrate their good debating skills, for example, in a countywide arena. Although the school judges the curriculum to be good, there are too few links between subjects. As a result, pupils working on design and technology tasks, for example, do not use as much scientific and mathematical knowledge as they could. The curriculum for personal development reflects the hard work and effort the school has invested resulting in a calm and caring community. Pupils are aware of how to make healthy lifestyle choices. They work well together, share experiences and are fully aware of the value of supporting each other.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care shown by the school to its pupils is outstanding. Strategies to support vulnerable pupils are well founded and extensive. Children experiencing emotional problems or difficulties with their work are identified quickly and supported effectively. The Nurture Group, for example, helps develop pupils' social and behavioural skills and fosters imaginative and cooperative play. Additionally, an outstanding initiative to help children who have made insufficient progress in reading and writing accelerates their progress and self-esteem. The school also has firm plans in place to extend this work to support children whose attendance is irregular. Child protection arrangements are effective and the school is a safe haven for its learners. Inclusion is a strong feature and the school council members speak proudly of their own efforts to make younger children feel valued and safe in school. The quality of support provided by learning assistants is high and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from sensitive support and realistic challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders know the school well and have successfully created an environment in which teaching and learning continue to improve. Changes in staffing continue to interrupt pupils' progress but effective management minimises its worst effects. The outstanding clarity of vision of the management team results in pupils making good progress overall, with standards steadily rising.

Subject coordinators effectively support teachers and by observing lessons and monitoring teaching plans are able to advise and help raise standards. Staff are used effectively and in particular support offered to increase opportunities for pupils experiencing delay in learning is good. Governors evaluate improvements and provide

strong support. They understand the strategies used to improve learning and, alongside senior staff, accurately identify the next steps to be taken.

All areas of school life are monitored regularly. Parents receive questionnaires and pupils' views are sought and acted upon. Parents feel the school is approachable and listens to their views; as a result, they are happy with the progress their children are making. Similarly pupils feel valued and take the opportunities the school offers to learn. Because of its considerable efforts to raise standards the school is rightly respected within the community. The school has clearly demonstrated its capacity to improve.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed talking with you about your work and finding out about the things you like doing.

We found that your school helps you learn well. It is a school that has improved a lot during the past three years, mostly because your headteacher and deputy head are brilliant at spotting what needs improving and they know how to make things better. You enjoy coming to school and work hard. You get on well together and are kind and helpful to each other. Your teachers also work hard and are good at helping you make fast progress in much of your work.

We think your school could continue to improve by making sure your teachers provide more exciting ways for you to learn some of your work. For example in giving you more opportunities to mix some subjects together. We think some of you should try to work even harder at your writing and your mathematics and have asked your teachers to arrange this.

You are enthusiastic about your school and we hope you carry on enjoying lessons and helping your teachers make Sandbach Community Primary School a good place to learn.