



Wallerscote Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111213
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278621
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mike McLachlan CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Northwich Road
School category	Community		Weaverham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Northwich, Cheshire CW8 3BD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01606 852148
Number on roll	207	Fax number	01606 854140
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Freeman
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr S Roberts

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	15 March 2006 - 16 March 2006	278621

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Wallerscote is an average sized primary school in a large village in a semi rural setting. Children are drawn from a very wide range of social backgrounds with a significant proportion from low socio-economic groups. The overall attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none is at an early stage of learning English. The school hosts a number of local community groups.

There is a unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) attached to the school; currently there are seven pupils attending the unit. An independently managed nursery is also attached to the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that this is a good school but also recognise that some features are outstanding. It gives very good value for money. Pupils start at school with low basic and social skills but the good quality of the Foundation Stage ensures good progress. Pupils reach standards that are just below average by the end of Year 2 and nearly all reach national standards by the time they leave school. This represents good and often very good progress for pupils in the main school. The quality of teaching is consistently good with some that is outstanding. Pupils become confident and mature citizens because of the outstanding care and guidance they receive. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils clearly enjoy their work and readily celebrate the good work of others. The school provides a good curriculum and many opportunities for enrichment. Pupils in the MLD unit reach below average standards but make good progress given their very low starting points.

This good work is achieved because of outstanding leadership across the school. The headteacher's deeply held principles of developing pupils' self-esteem alongside basic skills are shared by all. Staff and governors know the strengths of the school and have accurately identified what is needed to improve, including developing further the roles of subject coordinators and extending the good work done so far on improving writing. The school is held in high regard by the parents and the local community. The school has responded well to issues raised in the last inspection and clearly has the capacity and drive to bring about further developments.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

The school has rightly identified in its improvement plan a number of areas it wishes to develop and inspectors agree with these priorities. They are:

- developing the roles of coordinators in monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum to better share the most effective practice in all subjects
- further raising the profile of writing across the school
- completing the work on a directly accessible outdoor play area for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Inspectors readily agree with the school's view that pupils achieve well. Pupils join the Foundation Stage with well below average social, communication and mathematical skills. The very good provision in this stage results in the vast majority of pupils making good progress in these areas and in developing their creative and

physical skills and their knowledge of the world around them. Although pupils make good progress, by the end of this stage, pupils have not yet reached national standards. Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 are just below national expectations. However, pupils reach national averages by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6 in the English, mathematics and science tests. This represents good and often outstanding progress given pupils' low starting points. In 2005, a higher proportion than average reached the nationally expected Level 4 in all these subjects. An innovative approach to teaching and encouraging reading has led to a very high proportion of pupils achieving the highest available level in reading. Pupils' writing skills have improved since the last inspection and much is of a good quality but the school has rightly made improving writing a priority in this year's plans to try and bring it in line with the successes in reading. Information and communication technology skills are also very well developed. Standards have been steadily rising and the school exceeds the challenging targets set. Pupils in the main school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress because of the good support they receive. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well and none is at an early stage of learning English.

Pupils in the MLD unit start with very weak basic and social skills. Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are below national averages but, nevertheless, this represents good progress for these pupils.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

The school considers personal development and well-being to be good but inspectors consider this to be outstanding. The pupils are extremely proud of their school. They are very enthusiastic, work hard, and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary with pupils showing respect and consideration for others, enjoying their own and others' successes. They show very good social awareness, and very willingly accept responsibility. Pupils are cheerful, polite and helpful. The school has an active school council which has been influential in bringing improvements to school life, for example, they have improved play equipment to the school playground and have raised funds for urgent causes. Attendance is good, and there is no unauthorised absence. Healthy lifestyles and involvement in sport are promoted well and the school is on the way to gaining the Healthy Schools Award. As well as acquiring the basic skills they will need later in life, all pupils, including those in the MLD unit, are developing important life skills that will enable them to play a full part in society as adults. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Self-esteem and confidence are very high because all pupils' achievements are valued and rewarded. They are very actively involved in the wider community and in improving the local area. The pupils gain a good understanding of world religions and cultures through lessons and a wide

range of visitors.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Inspectors agree with the school's view that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and saw some outstanding teaching in all stages in the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, work very enthusiastically and make good progress. Teachers explain clearly what is to be learned and ensure that pupils fully understand what they have to do. They use questioning very well to develop pupils' language skills, and they allow them plenty of time to think. Relationships across the school are very good and the pupils respond exceptionally well to staff's high expectations of behaviour and display good independent and collaborative learning skills. All teachers provide helpful guidance in the classroom and mark pupils work in an informative and helpful manner. Parents say that 'teachers tailor their teaching methods to suit a very wide range of children' and inspectors agree with this. In the Foundation Stage, very well organised activities with good deployment of support staff, promotes language and learning across all subjects. Developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are given a very high profile in all lessons by teachers using modern technology effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching staff and provide high quality support in lessons. Detailed assessments are carried out so that previous learning is successfully built upon.

The quality of teaching and learning within the MLD unit is outstanding. Teaching is very tightly structured to match the needs of the pupils, both educationally and emotionally. The very well prepared activities promote learning exceptionally well, particularly in the areas of communication and language. Teachers and support assistants have an excellent understanding of where children are up to and what they need to do next.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Inspectors agree that the school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. The curriculum matches the needs of all pupils well and statutory requirements are met, including in the Foundation Stage. The teacher in the Reception class successfully compensates for the lack of easily accessible outdoor space, the construction of which is in progress. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy skills are promoted effectively in all lessons. A comprehensive programme across all year groups ensures information and communication technology skills are developed well

and computers are also well used to add interest. Able children receive additional lessons in languages and mathematics at the high school. Work in classrooms is enriched by many opportunities to take part in educational and theatre visits; for example, to Chester, Wrexham and the Lion salt works. Workshops are given by visiting music and dance groups. There is a wide range of extra curricular sporting and creative activities, including an enthusiastic choir which joins in regular concerts at the high school.

The curriculum available to the pupils attending the MLD unit matches their needs extremely well; it is broad, balanced and enriched. Careful record keeping ensures that children's development is kept on track and all individual needs are met.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that care, guidance and support are outstanding. The outstanding commitment of all staff in promoting the care and well-being of pupils ensures that all make good progress, feel safe and know they have an adult to turn to if needed. Arrangements for child protection are robust and understood by all, and the school has clear procedures in place for checking adults who work at the school. The attainment and progress of individual pupils are carefully tracked as they move through the school and any underachievement is quickly identified. All pupils are very well prepared both in basic skills and in self-confidence to move on to their next stage in learning. Parents are very well informed of the progress made by their children and speak highly of the care and guidance their children receive. For example, the parent of one child wrote 'coming to Wallerscote has been and probably will be the single biggest positive influence in his life'.

The MLD unit takes excellent care of its pupils. Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they need help, are upset or troubled. There are very strong links with parents and carers, who become very involved in their children's education and development. There are very strong links with all the appropriate outside agencies and with their future schools.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The school modestly judges leadership to be good. Inspectors consider that leadership across the school is outstanding. The headteacher's deeply held principles of valuing all pupils, ensuring that they leave school with good basic skills and with the self-confidence to do well, are shared by all. Senior staff responsible for different stages and year groups and the MLD unit, have high expectations and

are very effective in leading, directing and monitoring the quality of provision in their respective areas. The headteacher and his staff, supported by a strong governing body, know the strengths of the school and have, through accurate self-assessment, identified what is needed to improve further. The headteacher has rightly recognised that improving a good school requires extending leadership skills to all teachers. He and his staff have invested considerable time in training and in developing the monitoring and evaluation roles of the subject coordinators. This training is now complete and is already bearing fruit in the school's healthy eating campaign and in the improved support for subject areas. The school has long held the Investors in People (IIP) award and has recently met the IIP leadership and management standards. A very successful and innovative drive to improve standards in reading by involving parents and enthusing pupils is now complemented by a greater focus on writing skills. The views of parents and pupils are readily sought and acted on. The school has a deservedly very good reputation and supports the community very well through working with and sharing its facilities with many local groups. Imaginative use of resources ensures that the building offers a secure and exciting environment for pupils and staff. The leadership clearly has the capacity and drive to bring about further improvements.

Grade: 1

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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?	1	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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?	2	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?	1	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

We would like to thank you all for the way in which you made us feel so welcome when we were in your school. Your smiling faces, cheery hellos and your confidence in talking to us, whatever class we were in, was a credit to you and your teachers.

We think you go to a good school that tries really hard to make you feel safe and secure while you are learning about lots of different things. We think your teachers make lessons interesting and challenging.

We think you really enjoy your lessons and make good progress. We saw that in the way you were keen to answer questions, were able to work together and on your own and particularly in the way you were so well behaved.

We think the school is successful in trying to make you feel confident and take responsibility so that even the youngest of you are able to get on with your work on your own.

We think your school has a good staff team and that Mr Roberts and the other senior teachers are very good in knowing what the school needs to do to improve.

When we asked you what the school needed to do to be better, one of you kindly said 'nothing - this school is perfect'. We think you go to a very good school and to make it even better we agree with your headteacher that the following things need to be done:

- make sure that all your subjects are equally strong
- improve the outdoor facilities for the reception class
- concentrate on helping you to become better writers.

We think these are very good ideas and will help to make your school even better. You have a big part to play in making the last idea happen. Thank you for helping us with this inspection and for making our stay with you so enjoyable.