

Frodsham CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111247
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	288903
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Michael Mills
Headteacher	Miss Gail Fullbrook
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	School Lane Overton Frodsham Cheshire WA6 6AF
Telephone number	01928 733284
Fax number	01928 735930

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized voluntary controlled school situated in the relatively advantaged town of Frodsham. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average; the majority having moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is well below average. The school has achieved the International School Award and the Activemark Award for sports.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school, which plays a much-valued part in the local community. It has strong links with the neighbouring church and is highly regarded by pupils and parents. The school's philosophy is that 'only the very best will do' and this is transparent in every aspect of school life. It is a warm and friendly place, where adults and children show great respect for one another. 'It's a very happy, caring and supportive place for children and for parents,' is a comment that typifies the views of parents. Pupils talk with pride about their work, their beautiful school grounds and the amazing and stimulating range of activities the school provides to make learning fun. All these factors make a significant contribution to the exceptionally good progress that pupils make.

This constant drive for improvement stems from outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher and deputy headteacher set high standards and have built a team of highly motivated teachers and support assistants who are passionate about the school and can bring out the very best from each individual pupil, both socially and academically. There is a real team spirit and a shared sense that no matter how good the school is, it can always be even better. Governors and parents support the school well, giving generously of their time. A strong feature of the school is the way in which all elements of its performance are rigorously checked. Responsibility for this is shared by adults and children. School leaders carefully track pupils' progress from their earliest days in school to ensure they continue to achieve as much as they can. Teachers regularly observe one another in the classroom, sharing good practice and suggesting improvements. This means the quality of teaching is consistently outstanding. Similarly, pupils are encouraged to assess their own work against clear targets and to become independent and confident learners. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and its excellent management systems ensure it has outstanding ability to improve further. The school's overall judgements on its performance are overly modest, but this stems from a culture of continuous improvement. The top of the mountain is often reached, but the school will always find another to climb!

In the Foundation Stage, children get off to a flying start because of the good curriculum and excellent quality of teaching. Their outdoor play area restricts opportunities for learning outdoors somewhat, but the school is aware of this and has clear plans to improve it. All groups of pupils make outstanding progress relative to their starting point. On entry to the Reception class, children's skills are above those expected for their age and by the end of Year 6, standards are well above the national average. The rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is central to their achieving so well. The school keeps meticulous records of how well pupils are doing and uses the information effectively to set challenging targets and to provide extra support to those pupils who may need it. As a consequence, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress from their starting points. More able learners reach very high standards because they are given stimulating work according to their individual ability, and encouraged to move on quickly to the next stage of learning. Marking is excellent, and tells pupils exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.

The rich and exciting curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and has an outstanding impact on their personal development and well-being.

Teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to practice their skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) through

developing exciting and relevant projects around other subject areas. For example, a recent local history study provided opportunities for historical enquiry through interviewing members of the community, sifting through materials from local archives, collating findings and presenting them in a very professional manner. The International School Award reflects the school's strong international links which help pupils develop awareness and understanding of different cultures and traditions. All this helps pupils prepare for their future life in a diverse modern society.

Pupils know they are well cared for and appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. They respond with excellent attitudes to learning and good behaviour. Pupils enjoy playing together happily and know that running around in the school playground helps keep them fit and healthy. They feel safe and say that very rare incidents of bullying are swiftly dealt with. They have a very responsible attitude to both local and global communities and this is demonstrated in their numerous fund-raising activities for various charities and their involvement in projects to improve the environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has identified areas for improvement through its rigorous self-evaluation process and has made good arrangements to address them in its improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children have achieved the national standards expected for their age and enter Year 1 well prepared and able to access the full Key Stage 1 curriculum. They make steady progress to the end of Year 2, reaching standards well above the national average. This strong foundation, together with excellent teaching, leads to accelerated progress in Key Stage 2, so that by the end of Year 6, learners achieve very challenging targets and reach standards well above national expectations. This represents excellent progress overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their initial starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are enthusiastic and happy learners, who feel safe and secure and know who to turn to for help. They say that teachers are friendly, and are confident in seeking their advice and guidance. Due to this, attendance is well above the national average. Pupils are polite and well-mannered and their behaviour is good. They have a great many opportunities to make a positive contribution to the local community through regular concerts and performances involving their many talented musicians and fund-raising for charities. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, respecting themselves and one another. Assemblies and close links with the local church, give them opportunities to develop spiritually and to reflect on their values and beliefs. The school's whole ethos is rich in the cultural traditions of a wide variety of different societies and this prepares pupils extremely well for their future as responsible citizens. Their well-above-average basic skills in English and mathematics, science and ICT, ensure they are very well placed for their future economic well-being. The active school council, 'Peer Pals', playground buddy scheme, and thriving Eco-group give pupils of all ages opportunities to take on individual and collective responsibilities within the school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers plan work thoroughly, based on careful assessment of pupils' prior learning. Their lessons are well paced, appeal to a wide variety of different learning styles and give pupils 'hands on' experiences. This is particularly apparent in science lessons where pupils make excellent progress due to the high quality of practical experiments and teachers' very good subject knowledge. As one pupil commented, 'Science is great as you get to make lots of explosions!' Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively in groups and this adds greatly to the progress they make in lessons. Teachers provide rich opportunities for speaking and listening, thus nurturing pupils' ability to articulate their views and become confident learners. Written work is consistently well marked and reflects teachers' high expectations of both quality of work and presentation. Teachers also spend a great deal of their own time making classrooms and workbooks attractive. This stimulates pupils' enjoyment of their learning and gives them a real sense that their work is valued. Teaching in the Foundation Stage gives children an especially secure start to their school life and enables them to make excellent progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Excellent provision is made for all subjects. Pupils' experiences are enriched through inviting an enviable variety of visitors to work with the pupils and share their knowledge and expertise. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is further stimulated through many opportunities to visit residential centres. These visits make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. There is a wide range of after-school clubs, some of which are run by parents. The 'Young Engineers' club is a real favourite! History and geography lessons are lively and interesting because of the school's links with France, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and its outstanding use of the wealth of historical resources in the local community. Music is a real strength of the school. Pupils sing beautifully, compose their own pieces of music, and have opportunities to learn to play a variety of instruments. Their performances are of remarkably high quality due to the high expectations of the specialist teacher.

Pupils identified as being especially gifted and talented are encouraged and challenged to reach aspirational goals. They are well provided for in the day-to-day life of the school and further supported by the school's good links with the local high school and the 'Day-a-Week' enrichment programme. Similarly, the school more than meets the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is working towards the Inclusion Quality Mark.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The whole ethos of the school is very caring and this is reflected in the way pupils care for their school and for one another. All groups of learners are supported in their learning and receive excellent guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. The school positively encourages healthy eating and regular exercise, and teaches pupils about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. High-quality marking and assessment procedures track progress from the earliest days in school. Regular reviews mean any underachievement is tackled

early and more able pupils have appropriate levels of support and challenge. All pupils have clear targets in English and mathematics, which are regularly updated. The school works very well with parents and outside agencies. Parents really appreciate the 'open door' policy and the way their views are regularly sought and acted on where possible. All statutory procedures for safeguarding children are met and rigorously enforced.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leaders and managers at all levels, together with other staff have driven the school forward to reach exceptionally high standards. In addition, they have provided high standards of care and a real feeling that, in Frodsham school, all pupils are valued for their unique contributions to the school community and not just for academic achievement.

School leaders at all levels rigorously check performance as part of the school's high-quality self-evaluation procedures and this is why standards and achievement are outstanding. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very supportive. They oversee effective and efficient use of resources, so the school provides outstanding value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me so very welcome on my recent visit to your fantastic school. I really enjoyed my day with you and was very impressed with how polite and well mannered you all are. As I told Miss Fullbrook, you are a real credit to your school.

Your school is outstanding. This means that just about everything is right! Your teachers really care for you and help you to achieve excellent results in your tests. They also give you lots of opportunities to do exciting and interesting activities, like the trips to Fox Howl and Menai. You all work very hard and behave well in lessons and break times. Many of you take on responsible positions in school, looking after one another and making very sensible suggestions on things you would like to improve in your community. You think of other people and help them by raising money for charities and entertaining your families and members of the local community with your splendid musical performances. There's actually nothing I have asked your teachers to change, as they already make sure you enjoy learning and know that the outdoor play area for Reception children needs to be improved a little.

Thank you again for talking to me and telling me how much you enjoy learning and playing together. Good luck for the future.