

# Four Oaks Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131313
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	360253
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Shields

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Nikki Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Sara Howard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Walton Breck Road Liverpool Merseyside L5 0PA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons or part lessons and these included the observation of 13 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records, and additional evidence of the support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. A representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils and staff and the 36 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether pupils' attainment is improving in English and mathematics.
- How effectively assessment information is used to adjust teaching so that the needs of all pupils are met.
- Whether leaders and managers at all levels are effective and enable the school to secure improvement.
- Whether the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is accelerating children's achievements in all areas of learning.
- Whether the school is doing all it can to secure improvements in levels of attendance.

## Information about the school

Four Oaks is a larger than average-sized primary school. It was formed in April 2010 following the merger of two local primary schools owing to local reorganisation. As a result of the merger, there has been significant turbulence and changes of staff at all levels across the school. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Nearly two thirds of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and almost half of the pupils are assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities; this is much higher than average. The school houses a designated provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties (totalling 20 places), serving all areas across city. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Four Oaks is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly. This is because leaders and managers, including the knowledgeable governing body, are effective. They have successfully pulled together to tackle urgent priorities arising during a period of substantial turmoil following the merger of the two schools. For example, the impact of actions taken to tackle past underachievement in English and mathematics has resulted in a marked upward trend in the attainment of all groups of pupils. Pupils' progress and enjoyment of learning are getting better, but are satisfactory rather than good because, while a number of good lessons were observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching is still variable. Leaders recognise that they have some way to go to reach the consistently good and better quality of teaching that they are striving for. Typically, children enter the Nursery with well below expected skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment, although rising strongly, is well below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but improving rapidly.

Leaders and managers at all levels have a shared, clear vision for the future. They have acquired an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because monitoring and evaluation arrangements are robust. Pupils' progress is now tracked rigorously. Information is shared widely and so there is a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing. This is a key factor in enabling leaders and managers to pinpoint quickly where effective targeted strategies, to improve pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, should be delivered. Senior and middle leaders have responded rigorously and successfully to the challenges faced. This has resulted in a significant and rapid rise in attainment and demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Good care, guidance and support ensure pupils feel safe and happy. They develop a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. The day-to-day care of pupils is a notable strength. Consequently, from the Nursery onwards pupils feel safe, behave well, are happy and ready to learn. Attendance is average. The school works relentlessly to improve attendance and this robust focus has brought about a significant reduction in absenteeism. Most pupils comment that they enjoy their lessons, especially when they are given the opportunity to take part in tasks that are practical or where new technology is used. Pupils know that they have learning targets, but are unclear how these can be used to improve their learning. In the main, pupils are not aware how much progress they have made in their lessons.

Children have a satisfactory start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress. Indoors, learning areas are generally well resourced and this aids children's development. However, the range of resources outdoors restricts the opportunities children have to choose to enhance their skills and knowledge outside.

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Up to 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.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to further improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons
  - work is precisely tailored to pupils' needs and abilities
  - more consistent use is made of imaginative resources, including new technology in lessons.
- Enable pupils to know what progress they have made in their lessons and how to improve their work by ensuring that:
  - marking consistently matches the quality of the best practice
  - pupils understand the purpose of their learning targets and are fully involved in regularly reviewing them
  - the conclusions of lessons are used to establish what pupils have learnt.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
  - an effective system is in place to accurately assess and record children's progress
  - a wider range of stimulating resources is available outdoors to enhance children's skills and knowledge in all areas of learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

As a result of the robust and effective actions taken by senior leaders, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory and attainment throughout the school is rising. The legacy of past underachievement is being overcome and pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although uneven, is accelerating. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics, while rising rapidly, is well below average because pupils are still making up lost ground in their learning. Nevertheless, Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their aspirational targets, which are aimed at closing the attainment gap still further. The good range of support and intervention programmes is helping to increase pupils' progress and lift their attainment. Almost all pupils who take part make good progress and, in some cases, make great leaps in their learning. Pupils in the designated provision make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their abilities, and sometimes complex needs. Their progress and achievement is stronger in the development of their speech and language skills because of the well targeted support and guidance they receive from visiting professionals.

Relationships are friendly and pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they need it. When given the opportunity, the majority of pupils work well with a partner or in small groups. This is helping them to become confident learners. Many pupils say they now learn a lot in lessons, especially when activities are exciting or when new technology is used. In these instances, pupils' attention is captured, they become engrossed in learning and their

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progress is good. Similarly, when tasks are challenging or closely tailored to their ability, pupils' motivation and concentration increases. However, these are not consistent features in all classes and so pupils' enjoyment of learning is uneven, but satisfactory overall.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory. Their strong moral and social development has a positive influence on their behaviour and the good relationships they form with each other and adults. Pupils care about each other: 'If you see someone hasn't got a friend, you go and be one.' is a view that typifies that of many. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given, such as being members of the school council, eco committee and as play leaders. They make a satisfactory contribution to the immediate community. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident there is an adult who will help them if they are troubled. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to live healthy lifestyles. The majority regularly take part in sporting activities and events organised by the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Despite still being variable, the quality of teaching is improving; this is a key factor in the sustained upturn in pupils' achievement. In the most successful lessons, teachers use well-chosen resources, exciting practical tasks and new technology which engage pupils' interest. Questioning is carefully tailored and makes pupils think more deeply about their learning. The end of lessons is used well to reinforce key teaching points and check what

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pupils have learnt. These features, however, are not consistent in every lesson. Sometimes good opportunities are provided for pupils to talk in pairs; this successfully promotes speaking and listening and cooperation. Some teaching fails to fully engage pupils because expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, teachers talk for too long and pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet. Teachers are starting to make better use of good quality assessment information to provide pupils with a wider range of tasks. However, activities are not varied enough to meet the precise needs of pupils' different levels of attainment in each class. Learning targets are not always communicated clearly enough so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. In the best practice, marking is helpful and provides constructive comments to help pupils improve, but this is not so in all classes.

The curriculum is appropriately organised. Intervention and support programmes to boost pupils' basic skills make a positive contribution to their rising attainment. Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and mathematical skills in a range of contexts are satisfactory. There are good arrangements for pupils' personal, social, emotional and health education. Activities available beyond lessons are varied and much enjoyed by the pupils.

Pupils benefit from good quality care, guidance and support. There is good help for individuals whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This has led to noticeable improvements in pupils' attendance, behaviour and self-esteem. A particular strength is the work and support provided by the learning mentor, who is held in high regard by pupils and their families: 'She's always available if you need a chat or advice.' is a typical view expressed by both pupils and their families. Individual learning plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are satisfactory rather than good because sometimes targets are not focused sharply enough to enable pupils to take small steps to improve their learning. Arrangements to support pupils as they move from year group to year group and then on to secondary school are effective. Rigorous and robust arrangements to monitor and promote attendance have resulted in a significant reduction in persistent absence and a rise in attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Since her appointment, the headteacher has managed the period of significant turmoil within the school extremely well and focused the school on moving forward. In this she is supported well by the capable deputy headteacher; they both demonstrate a steely determination to improve the quality of provision for all pupils. Leaders and managers, at

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all levels, have been relentless in their determination to improve pupils' attainment and are achieving significant success in this. Management systems to track the progress made by pupils over time have been firmly established and are easy to access and interpret. A rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, including teaching and learning, is used effectively by senior and middle leaders to drive improvement. Robust plans are in place and priorities for development are clear and accurate. Most staff value their relevant training and development, such as the 'lesson study model'. This initiative is effective and enables staff to share good practice and so raise the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

The supportive and effective governing body holds the school closely to account. It is fully involved in shaping the future direction of the school and monitors the quality of provision well. The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection: any concerns are swiftly acted upon and well-targeted support and guidance put in place for individuals. A particular strength is the day-to-day arrangements for health, safety and security of the site, staff and pupils. Satisfactory arrangements promote equal opportunity and help the school to tackle any discrimination. The school is well aware of the need to continue to increase the achievement of all pupils. The school promotes community cohesion well within its own community and the immediate local area; there are growing opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the wider national and global communities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are warmly welcomed into the Nursery and Reception classes. Effective induction arrangements ensure that they settle quickly and follow routines. They are safe and cared for well. There is a good emphasis on developing their personal and social skills.



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Consequently, children have trusting relationships with adults, behave well and play and cooperate happily together. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. As a result they enter Year 1 with skills that are still well below average for their age. Indoors, planned activities generally have an appropriate balance between those children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. Although the outdoor area is used continuously throughout the day, the range of resources is narrow and this holds back children's learning and progress if they choose to be outside. Assessments of children's achievements are made, but these are not accurate in showing the progress children make over time. As a result day-to-day planning cannot be adjusted effectively in order to match activities precisely to children's needs. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Teamwork is strong and there are appropriate plans in place to develop the stage further.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

Inspectors received a well below-average rate of response to the inspection questionnaire. Most of the parents and carers who responded indicate a positive view about all aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers consider that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour nor help them to support their children's learning. Through their extensive review of the school's records, observations and discussions with pupils and staff, the inspectors found the school has effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and appropriate arrangements in place to help parents and carers to support their children's learning. A few parents and carers expressed the view that the school is not led and managed effectively. Inspectors found that leadership and management at all levels is effective in helping the school to improve rapidly.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Four Oaks 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 257 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	53	16	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	44	20	56	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	39	21	58	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	39	19	53	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	44	16	44	3	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	42	17	47	4	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	25	25	69	2	6	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)	9	25	20	56	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	47	16	44	2	6	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	36	18	50	2	6	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	22	23	64	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	28	19	53	1	3	3	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	39	18	50	3	8	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



25 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Four Oaks Primary School, Liverpool, L5 0PA**

I am writing to thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspection team when we came to inspect your school. Four Oaks Primary School is a satisfactory school and it is improving rapidly. Here are some of the things we found out.

- We agree with all of you who told us that adults take good care of you and help you to learn how to stay safe and live healthy lifestyles. Your behaviour is good and you all get along with each other.
- We also agree with those who told us that adults will help you if you are sad or troubled.
- You told us that most of your lessons have got better and you now learn more, especially when activities are practical. We agree and have asked your school to improve teaching so that it is always good or better and to ensure work is always just at the right level to help you learn more quickly.
- Most of you also said that you are not clear how your learning targets will help you to make your work better. We have asked your teachers to clearly explain these targets to you and to make sure that when they mark your work their comments always tell you how you can improve.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a satisfactory start to their education. They enjoy learning, but there is not enough equipment for children to use outdoors. We have asked your teachers to provide more outdoor equipment to make the outdoors a more exciting place to learn. We have also asked them to make sure that the activities they plan always help children to get the most from their learning.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff and the governing body have worked tremendously hard to make lots of improvements to your school.

Thank you once again for being so helpful and, do not forget, keep trying hard with your work.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields

Lead inspector

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