

# Well Lane Primary School

Well Lane, Tranmere, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH42 5PF

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave for secondary school. This demonstrates good achievement from their low starting points on entry to the school.
- The school places strong emphasis on reading as the basis for all learning. As a result, pupils read widely, enjoy the written word and read aloud with confidence and expression.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them are strong. The hard-working team of teaching assistants provides impressive support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- Pupils are proud of their school and feel secure because, in their words, 'Our friends are around us and staff members are always there if we need them.' Parents spoken with are of the same opinion and believe that their children are looked after exceptionally well. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. They have good manners and are very courteous to each other and to visitors.
- The curriculum supports pupils' learning effectively and there is a wide range of educational visits and after-school clubs.
- The highly-committed headteacher is supported by a talented deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. These staff lead by example and have an accurate view of school performance and of how it can continue to improve. Governors also know the school well, support it to the hilt, but also hold the leadership rigorously to account.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not rapid enough because assessment of their learning does not always lead to experiences which meet their needs closely enough. The level of challenge for children is inconsistent.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, the balance between indoor and outdoor learning and between activities planned by staff and those chosen by children is not always what it should be.
- Strategies to ensure pupils continue to make better progress in mathematics are not fully embedded.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons and each teacher was observed at least once. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also attended a school assembly and visited a Year 3 session in the local authority health caravan, which was part of the school's health week theme.
- Inspectors had discussions with two groups of pupils, including members of the school council. They also held meetings with parents, four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, support staff, subject coordinators and the senior leadership team.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors took account of written communications from parents and also of their views expressed in the school's internal questionnaire. They also took account of the 21 returns from the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a variety of documentation, including internal and external pupil progress and attainment data, pupils' files and workbooks, school development planning and the school's procedures to enable it to gain an accurate view of its performance. In addition, they considered minutes from governing body meetings, reports written on behalf of the local authority and documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Jim Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed Owens

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is well above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority) is high, at three times the national average.
- Most pupils are White British and there are very few from minority ethnic heritages or with English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which is free of charge for those who attend.
- Well Lane Primary is a Family Works Accredited School and has Healthy School status. It also holds the International School (intermediate) award.
- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.

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

- Accelerate children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - improving the use and accuracy of assessment to ensure that planning leads to experiences which are more closely related to children's individual learning needs
  - ensuring that levels of challenge in the setting are consistently high enough to promote accelerated progress for all learners
  - ensuring that there is an ideal balance between indoor and outdoor learning and also between adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Embed the strategies already in place to ensure the continued acceleration of pupils' progress in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are low in relation to those expected for their age. Their skills in communication, language and literacy are exceptionally low. Over time, they have made good progress in both Nursery and Reception, but this progress has slowed recently because of staffing issues. Nonetheless, children continue to make good progress in their personal development. They behave well and enjoy their time in the setting.
- As a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching, pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and reach broadly average attainment, particularly in reading and writing, by the end of Year 6.
- The school has reversed the 2012 'blip' in attainment in mathematics and standards in the current Year 6 class are much higher than they were last year. In relation to their starting points, therefore, pupils' achievement across the school is good overall. Attainment at the end of both key stages has risen since the previous inspection and there are increasing numbers of pupils who are making more-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of reading is a major strength and pupils across the school read widely. In Year 2, pupils read aloud with accuracy and expression and enjoy the books they choose from school. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils read with confidence and understanding and are skilled in splitting complex words, for example, 'residual', 'exceptionally' and 'impressionable', into segments in order to pronounce them accurately. Pupils are correct in their belief that 'good reading leads to good writing.'
- The school uses pupil premium funding in a variety of ways to ensure that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals can make the same progress as others. The school invests strongly in information and communication technology as a learning tool and provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of cultural and educational experiences, a visit to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, for example. As a result, pupils supported by the pupil premium make the same good progress as their peers and reach broadly average attainment in English and mathematics.
- Similarly, as a result of a close focus on the impact of small group and one-to-one support sessions, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection are entirely satisfied with the progress their children are making.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding classroom practice in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Invariably, there are good relations between adults and pupils, and pupils are treated with dignity and respect.
- Pupils make the best progress in lessons where teachers' questioning requires them to think more deeply about the subject-matter. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, for example, pupils responded exceptionally well to the teachers' relentless challenge when they were required to identify the mathematical pattern in a complex problem in relation to the number of handshakes completed by increasing numbers of people. By the end of the lesson, they could use an equation to decide accurately upon how many handshakes would occur if a group of 20 people all shook hands with each other once.
- Similarly, progress accelerates when pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and in groups to support each other in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 rose to the challenge when they had to use mathematical language, such as 'one less than' and 'one more than', to question their classmates about which numbers they were thinking of. They made outstanding progress in developing their calculation skills and then moved on easily to more

complex additions in relation to the prices of healthy foods.

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted effectively when they have to describe exactly the skills they are developing during the lesson. During a physical education lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils' literacy was fostered well when they were asked to explain how they could pass the ball to their partner and miss out the pupil in the middle.
- In Nursery and Reception on occasions, the level of challenge is inconsistent. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning does not lead to the planning of experiences which are exactly what pupils need to make good and better progress. Moreover, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is not always an ideal balance between opportunities for indoor and outdoor learning and also in the activities planned by the adults and those chosen by the children.
- The quality of marking is good and on occasions outstanding. Pupils are commended for their effort and achievement and receive detailed advice on the 'next steps' and how they can improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Parents spoken to during the inspection believe their children are happy and feel safe in the school. One spoke for many with the words, 'This is a friendly, welcoming environment in which the teachers and teaching assistants are approachable. There is so much care here and the school knows how to nurture our children.'
- Pupils agree and say that they are safe because there is always an adult to talk to if they have problems. They also speak highly of the play leaders, who make sure that no-one is lonely at break and lunchtime. They add that, although bullying sometimes happens, it is rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff when it occurs. Pupils have a good understanding of the nature of bullying, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying and bullying based on prejudice. They are also fully aware of the benefits and dangers of working online and of how to stay safe when they are using the Internet.
- The school council is actively involved in attempting to combat the vandalism from outside, which the school experiences on occasions. They have designed posters and written letters to the local community to ask them to be vigilant of inappropriate behaviour near the school, so that 'We can keep our school safe and lovely.' School councillors are also given opportunities to question candidates for teaching posts at the school.
- Pupils speak highly of the wide variety of extra-curricular activities, clubs and educational visits they have. They have a secure understanding of how to eat healthily and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage comment accurately on healthy and unhealthy food.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They know the difference between right and wrong and their tireless support for a variety of charities is well known within the local community. They have a good understanding of cultures and religions which are different to their own, visit local churches and enjoy celebrating Chinese New Year. They also value the links with the school in Kenya. They visit local secondary schools to attend drama productions and take part in a range of games and sports organised by a local specialist sports college.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Staff speak with one voice about the drive and determination of the headteacher. In their view, 'Her vision for how the school can move forward is clear and is shared by all of us. We feel challenged but supported and we are encouraged to share our good and exemplary practice for the benefit of the pupils in our care.' Indeed, the headteacher and senior team lead by example and have high expectations of what staff and pupils can do.
- Leaders have an honest and accurate view of school performance and they know exactly what is needed to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength. They reject complacency and are aware, for example, that, as a result of recent staffing issues, pupils' academic progress in

the Early Years Foundation Stage has slowed somewhat. In addition, they introduced successfully a range of strategies to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics but they recognise that these strategies are not yet fully embedded.

- Performance appraisal arrangements are secure but continue to be developed further. Staff benefit from a variety of training opportunities, but professional development is always linked to the needs of the school and its impact is evaluated closely.
- The curriculum places strong emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. However, the many different subjects on offer are celebrated by the vibrant display of pupils' work on corridors and in classrooms. Pupils particularly like art and the singing in the lunchtime Spanish club is a joy to hear.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and rejects all forms of discrimination. Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice meet current requirements and are updated regularly.
- The local authority provides good support for the school. Representatives visit on a regular basis and write reports, which demonstrate how successful the headteacher and senior leaders have been in promoting on-going improvements in pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed about all aspects of school performance and they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They challenge the leadership rigorously. For example, they oversee the spending of pupil premium funding and ask searching questions of the headteacher and senior team about the impact of this spending on the achievement, both academic and personal, of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
  - The governing body is also fully aware of how the school is attempting to improve the quality of teaching and they ensure that teachers only receive financial reward if they meet their classroom targets in relation to pupils' progress.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105050
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	400047

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

<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>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Weise
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shirley Callaghan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 645 9844
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