



23 May 2005

Mr K Basnett  
Headteacher  
Childwall Valley Primary School  
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Dear Mr Basnett

### **Fresh Start: Inspection of Childwall Valley Primary School**

Following the visit of Roger Hartley HMI to your school on 3 and 4 May 2005, I write to confirm the findings which are recorded below.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school opened in September 2003. The focus of the visit was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the raising attainment plan.

During the visit eight lessons were inspected. A meeting was held with the headteacher and informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the LEA.

Standards of attainment were satisfactory in three lessons and unsatisfactory in five, including two where they were close to expected levels. As on the last monitoring inspection, they were consistently satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in a Year 5 lesson.

The children receive an excellent start to their education in the Foundation Stage class. A wide range of well-resourced activities promotes the different areas of learning. The staff work hard to make connections between the different learning experiences, often associated with a common theme. During the inspection, the current theme on 'food' was used to plan a range of activities beginning with the children listening to the story, 'Little Red Hen Made a Pizza', as a prelude to taking part in an extensive range of activities. They made a pizza, grated cheese, spread sauce, handled a range of foods, and made choices about toppings; played in the 'Pizza Pasta Parlour', extending their mark-making skills taking customers orders, and practised cooking; recorded the story on tape with children assuming the roles

of the different characters; and modelled pizzas using dough. Later in the day, the children used different percussion instruments and extended their awareness of beat, rhythm and the properties of different instruments in a music session. All of these examples were of high quality. The adults are skilled at knowing the learning potential of an activity, asking questions and extending the learning of individual children. The children clearly enjoy their work and so too do the very well-led staff.

Recent initiatives to extend the principles of good practice in the Foundation Stage to the Key Stage 1 class are beginning to take hold, particularly in providing more practical work, although at times the work provided for the children is too difficult or is not explained clearly. Standards continue to edge up slowly throughout Key Stage 2. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are suitably challenged and work is well-pitched to their different learning needs. Progress was brisk in both lessons observed, and a well-executed science lesson on solids, liquids and gases, resulted in the pupils knowing the differences between them and that condensation is the opposite of evaporation. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were busy preparing for their imminent National Curriculum tests.

Progress in learning was very good in two lessons, good in four and satisfactory in two. These proportions have improved since the last inspection and are directly linked to the quality of teaching, high interest levels in the work, and content relevant to the pupils' current learning needs.

The quality of teaching has also improved. It was very good in two lessons, good in three and satisfactory in three. Planning is thorough, consistent, and identifies evaluation opportunities, although there is no requirement to record an evaluation. The purposes of the lessons are always shared with the pupils and sometimes referred to at the end of the lesson. However, there were no examples of using objectives throughout the lesson as a means of involving the pupils in evaluating progress. In almost all the lessons the work was accurately matched to the pupils' needs. A feature of the teaching is the way in which the teachers achieve a balance between teaching knowledge and skills and keeping pupils' on their toes by varying the way lessons are presented. In all of the lessons, teaching assistants were well deployed and briefed and made a significant contribution to the pupils' progress.

The pupils were very well-behaved and consistently showed good attitudes to work, especially in their desire to learn, make a contribution, and listen to others. They respond well to encouragement and their involvement in extra-curricular activities and special projects gives them an impetus to give of their best.

The school continues to be very well led and managed. The headteacher has acted purposefully to address the issues raised at the last monitoring inspection: there has been an extensive programme of support for a teacher; continued improvement in writing skills, particularly in a cross-curricular context; and an effective programme to use the strengths in the Foundation Stage elsewhere in the

school. The senior management team gives very good support to the headteacher, but its members also make significant individual contributions, particularly in assessment, phase and subject leadership.

The raising attainment plan continues to provide a framework for improvement, although the progress made by the school makes its initial purpose redundant.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and Executive Director, Education and Lifelong Learning Services for Liverpool City Council. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division