



Westvale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104431
LEA Knowsley
Inspection number 277153
Inspection dates 28 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Melverley Road
School category	Community		Westvale
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Kirkby, Liverpool L32 0RQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 477 8470
Number on roll	299	Fax number	0151 477 8471
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Wall
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs G Holland

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average and serves a socially deprived area. It houses a speech and language unit and currently ten children access its services. A very high proportion of children are entitled to free school meals. Most children speak English as their first language. Very few children have minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has achieved many awards including Investors in People, Sport England 'Activemark' and Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. It has the confidence of its parents and children. Senior managers have stabilised the school after a period of staff changes and created a very positive atmosphere in which all children can learn. However, their evaluation of its effectiveness is too high. They recognise that much work remains to be done to improve children's rate of progress.

Children feel safe, behave well and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Procedures to keep children safe are good. Recent initiatives have made a huge impact on attendance but it remains below average. Children make steady progress through the school. Standards are very low on entry to the nursery and remain low through the school. Sound teaching helps children improve but the rate of progress is not yet quick enough.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because teaching is focussed on their needs and they benefit from additional help, often in small groups. The school makes good use of other agencies to support these children's learning needs. All children benefit from the effective links with the local secondary school. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress from a very low starting point.

The school knows what it has to do to improve standards and has responded quite well to the issues from the last inspection; it has demonstrated that it has the desire and capacity to improve further. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by consistently challenging all children, particularly those who are higher attaining.
- Introduce a system for recording data which is manageable for staff and which enables senior managers to monitor and evaluate children's progress more effectively.
- Continue to improve children's attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children join the nursery with standards which are a long way below those normally found. Their spoken language is very poorly developed, with some children communicating mainly in gestures. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because teaching through practical activities is effective in helping them learn. However, they do not achieve the standards expected for their age group when they start in Year 1.

By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are broadly average and children achieve well, but standards in writing and mathematics are well below average. This represents

satisfactory progress. The downward trend of results was successfully halted in 2005. These results compare favourably with those of other local schools, although they are significantly below the national average.

By the end of Year 6 children's standards are below average in English and mathematics but average in science. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 6. They do well in science because it is taught in a very practical way. Targets have not been met because children's progress has not been monitored rigorously enough. Tasks for higher attaining children are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly in mathematics.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets set for them. They have good additional support and class teachers plan suitable tasks with their abilities in mind.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children really like their school. They respect their teachers and understand that they are at school to learn. They behave well and are courteous and friendly. They know about right and wrong and have furthered their understanding by helping write class rules. Children know a good deal about other cultures and also work well in pairs or teams. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation that this aspect is of good quality.

Children know how to stay safe in simple ways, like handling tools. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit; for example Year 5 know about the hazards of smoking after a talk from the health visitor. Events like a Healthy Eating day also make a valuable contribution and children love to run and to play sports.

Children actively contribute to school developments through an effective school council. They learn to listen to others and to discuss a point constructively. The recently developed 'Welcome to Westvale School - A Guide for New Children' provided the opportunity for children to work together as a design team. Older children take responsibility and develop their social skills and relationships well, for instance by being playtime helpers. Children's positive attitudes and desire to learn help prepare them well for the next stage in their learning.

Attendance levels remain low but the school is working hard to improve them and strategies implemented by the learning mentor are already having a very positive effect.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The inspection team judge this aspect to be satisfactory. The school judges teaching to be good because staff are effective in encouraging positive attitudes to learning. This is important but children do not make enough progress in their learning.

Effective teaching in Foundation Stage, based on children learning through mostly practical activities, helps children make good progress. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of all children.

All teachers have a positive relationship with their class and use praise well. Particularly effective teaching uses new technology to enthral children and shares with them what they will be learning. At the end children indicate how confident they are with the new idea. When teaching is satisfactory adults rely too heavily on talk when something more visual or interactive would help the children understand much better. There are satisfactory procedures for testing children. Data is collected and evaluated. It is used quite well to plan the next stage in children's learning though the thinking of higher attaining children could be challenged more. Evaluation of children's progress is not rigorous enough because systems are cumbersome and too time consuming.

The teaching of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Difficulties are identified early. Teaching assistants are sensitive and patient with their groups and the tasks children undertake are appropriate to their ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced and is planned thoughtfully to meet the needs of most children. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a good programme which covers all areas of learning. Learning opportunities are extended by the recent introduction of French and by the good programme of visits and visitors. After school clubs are well attended and encourage children to stay healthy. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Their individual programmes are carefully planned to meet each child's needs. Provision for children's personal, social and health education and citizenship is good, for instance encouraging them to adopt a healthy life style.

A recent review of the whole school curriculum has led to staff exploring links between subjects, so that children can see the purpose behind learning skills in English, mathematics and computing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Positive relationships between children and adults ensure that all children feel safe and that there is someone they would turn to

if they needed help. Behaviour is closely monitored; incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are dealt with firmly. Staff use praise well and reward systems are effective in motivating children. The learning mentor is very effective in supporting vulnerable children. Procedures for improving attendance are working. Policies on child protection are thorough and procedures secure. Procedures for first aid and risk assessment are good. There is a strong caring ethos, which is evident in all aspects of the school's work.

Well trained teaching assistants provide good support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children know how to improve their work from teachers' comments. Effective links with the local secondary school help overcome children's anxieties about transfer.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The inspection team judge this aspect to be satisfactory whilst the school believes it to be good. This is because measures to improve standards have yet to make a major impact. The senior staff have stabilised the school after a period of change that saw five headteachers in six years. They have established a wonderful climate for learning in which children behave well and want to learn. Teachers can now focus more effectively on raising standards. Parents and children value their school highly and are given opportunities to express their views. From these views and the analysis by staff, the school is aware of its weaknesses. Senior managers know that staff and children must have a 'we can do this' attitude if standards are to be improved and are working hard to establish it. The work of the English coordinator is an excellent example of this but the measures she put in place have yet to make an impact on standards. In mathematics problems have been identified but no action plan is in place to remedy them. The school evaluates test data but its systems are difficult to manage. Staff cannot easily get a clear picture of children's progress.

Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the speech and language unit, is well managed. The governing body is very supportive of the school and knows what is happening there because each governor is linked with a class. However, they do not hold the senior managers to account sufficiently for the school's low standards. The school has shown that it is able to improve further because it knows its weaknesses and through its actions it has halted the recent decline in standards. The school can improve further because it gets effective leadership from the headteacher and her deputy and it knows its weaknesses. For example, concerted action by all staff has halted the recent decline in standards.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Mr Johnson, Mr Alexander and I were delighted by your warm welcome. We were impressed with your school and particularly liked the way that you all worked and played together so well. You and your parents think that your school is good and in many respects it is. You behave well, want to learn and most of you attend every day. However, we feel that you do not make enough progress in English and mathematics and so we feel that your school is satisfactory rather than good.

Some other things we particularly liked about your school were:

- the good range of visits and other experiences which helped you learn more about the world around you
- the teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes
- the calm atmosphere in which all of you can learn
- how well run and influential the school council is
- the strong links with Brookfield School, like using their sports facilities
- the efforts of Mrs Holland and her team to improve the school for you.

Your school is a happy place but it has to do more to help you learn. We have asked Mrs Holland, her staff and the governors to:

- give all children work in mathematics which challenges their thinking
- track more closely the progress you all make
- ensure that your parents send all of you to school every day.

Thank you for being so polite and helpful to us. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, hearing you sing and watching you play in the playground so sensibly. We wish you all the best for the future.