



# Grange Valley Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 104774  
**LEA** St. Helens  
**Inspection number** 277216  
**Inspection dates** 10 July 2006 to 11 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Frank Carruthers CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Heyes Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Haydock
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		St Helens, Merseyside WA11 0XQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678300
<b>Number on roll</b>	213	<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678304
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr D Larner
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Philip Hall

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average-sized primary school draws children from mixed social backgrounds. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. The school roll has fallen since the time of the last inspection, and this is also a feature of other schools in the neighbourhood. There are very few children from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has gained the local authority's Early Years Quality Mark and the ActiveMark, and is working towards the Healthy Schools Award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for the children, who achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6. Standards are broadly average in Year 6. Strong features of the school are the provision in the Foundation Stage, the care, guidance and support the staff provide for all children and the resulting good quality of the children's personal development and well-being. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, being good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory elsewhere. However, teachers' expectations are not high enough for what children can achieve and work is not always sufficiently challenging. The use of homework in Years 3 to 6 has insufficient impact, and marking is not closely linked to children's targets for learning. The curriculum is satisfactory with good features, but classrooms lack computer technology to enrich what is taught.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, despite a falling roll, and standards have shown a steady rise. Procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the school have developed satisfactorily in recent terms, so that there is agreement between the school's views and most of the inspection judgements. The exceptions are judgements on overall effectiveness and leadership and management, which the school judged too favourably. The good direction of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is helping to move the school forward and the school has clear capacity to improve. The deficit in the budget is being managed well and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations in Years 1 to 6 for what children can achieve so that standards rise further in English, mathematics and science.
- Make better use of homework in Years 3 to 6 and link marking more closely to targets for children's learning in Years 1 to 6.
- Develop resources in classrooms for information and communication technology (ICT) in order to enrich the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children's achievement from Nursery to Year 6 is satisfactory overall. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery varies from year to year from broadly average to well below average. By the end of the Reception year, children have progressed well in all areas of learning but standards vary. For example, most of the children in the current year group have achieved most of the early learning goals and standards are average; standards last year were below average but progress was good.

Most children achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of good individual and group support they receive. The

very few children learning English as an additional language achieve well because they quickly settle in and are helped to become confident in the new language. Standards in Year 6 have improved since the time of the last inspection and were just above average last year. Standards in the current year group are lower, being below average in English, mathematics and science, because there are more children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the year group. Nevertheless, the great majority have achieved levels predicted for them and this indicates satisfactory progress. The school does not always meet fully the challenging targets set for children in Year 6 and this is a key aspect for improvement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good because of the good standards of care, support and guidance that the staff provide. Children enjoy school and say they feel safe. Attendance is in line with the national averages and there are awards for good attendance. Behaviour is good and children say that, 'Everyone gets along together well in our school.' Weekly sessions of 'Golden Time' reward hard work and good conduct. Children are confident and friendly and there have been no exclusions in recent years. The school council plays an active role in fundraising for charitable causes and in organising community events and celebrations, for example, a recent World Cup Day. The school councillors have influenced plans to improve the outdoor play areas next year.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Displays around the school reflect children's growing awareness of other cultures and world religions. Children's understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is developing and the school is working towards the Healthy School Award. Children know about dangers associated with alcohol and substance abuse and they understand about health and safety issues. There are plenty of opportunities to participate in sports, during and outside school hours. Children learn to collaborate with each other in lessons through teamwork and work with a partner.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage, where learning is well planned and the children enjoy a rich range of experiences. Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with the children and help their personal, social and emotional development particularly well. This is also true of teaching in Years 1 to 6 where teachers use well the school's strategies to motivate the children and promote good attitudes to learning and levels of concentration. Nevertheless, expectations for how well the children should be doing are not consistently high. As a result, children's achievement is satisfactory rather than good.

There is, however, good practice for the school to share, for example, in Year 4. The teaching of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and their individual education plans are clear with challenging but achievable targets. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, but although children have targets for improvement, the marking of work is rarely focused on these. The use of homework is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6 and is not making sufficient impact on children's achievement. Monitoring by specialists from the local authority is helping to guide the school's actions to overcome these shortcomings.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers plan together to ensure continuity, breadth and progression across the age range. Subject leaders are developing skills in monitoring the quality of the curriculum and this is starting to have a positive impact on achievement. Positive plans are in place to link subjects together, and the school also recognises that there are too few opportunities at present for the children to work on extended pieces of writing. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and good curricular provision is made for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Modern foreign languages and a range of sporting and musical activities add enrichment in Years 3 to 6 both during and after school. Equipment for ICT is mainly limited to the computer suite. Though the suite is used well by staff, there is little new technology in classrooms for teachers to use to enhance the presentation of subjects and add further interest for the children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the care, guidance and support of children that staff provide is good. Staff know the children and their families well and parents report that concerns are dealt with promptly. Procedures and practices for all aspects of child protection, health, safety and safe recruitment are in place. Arrangements for children starting in the Nursery class are good and a strong relationship is forged with parents. As a result, children settle quickly into routines. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. The promotion of good attendance and behaviour and giving the children a say in whole-school decision making are integral to the ethos of the school. The staff have introduced good procedures that monitor and track children's achievements. These have been effective in identifying the learning needs of individual children but are not used consistently to plan work for different levels of attainment in classes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The school's view is that they are good, but inspection findings show a number of management initiatives are

not yet fully embedded. The dynamic team of headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported effectively by governors, is addressing well the challenges caused by a falling roll, which brought about a budget deficit in 2004. The problem is being resolved through a staged approach, supported by the local authority, which is intended to bring the budget back into balance during the next financial year. Expenditure has been constrained, however. Despite these difficulties, the school has made good progress since the last inspection in addressing key issues and raising standards. The senior management of the school has good capacity to improve the work of the school.

Well supported by local authority consultants, the school has set clear benchmarks for improvement and there are good plans in place for the next stages of its development. Actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, however, are not yet fully embedded. A well-structured school improvement plan shows that its leaders know their school well, but there are too many priorities for them all to be achievable at once.

The restructuring of the senior management team is a positive step to strengthen school leadership. The governing body is well led by the chairperson. Recent additional members are helping to expand the representation on the committee. Subject leaders carry out their work satisfactorily and are beginning to use data about the school's performance to plan provision. They are gaining expertise in monitoring the quality of the provision but the impact of this is yet to be fully felt. Partnerships with outside agencies and local schools are good and benefit the children's learning well.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. Please pass on our thanks to the other children we met and spoke to while we were at school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. These are some of the things that are good in your school.

- You have a dynamic headteacher and deputy headteacher who are constantly doing their best to make your school a better place in which to learn.
- The Nursery and Reception staff give the children a good start in school.
- The staff take good care of you and help you all to be fit, safe and healthy.
- Your behaviour is good and you are all growing into sensible students who want to learn.
- The staff provide you with good opportunities for sports as well as providing activities and clubs after school.

There are some important things for the headteacher and staff to do to make the school even better:

- to do as much as they can to help you to do better in English, mathematics and science
- to give the older children homework that really adds to what they learn
- to refer more to your targets when they mark your work
- to add more computer resources, such as interactive whiteboards, in classrooms to enrich the lessons.