



Woodchurch Road Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 105047
LEA Wirral
Inspection number 277280
Inspection dates 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Ian Thompson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Woodchurch Road
School category	Community		Oxton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 9LJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 6523104
Number on roll	463	Fax number	0151 6537276
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr F Doyle
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs A Maher

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 27 February 2006 - 28 February 2006	Inspection number 277280
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school serving a socially and economically mixed urban area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are of white British heritage; others belong to a variety of minority ethnic groups. A very small proportion are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is about average. The school is part of an Educational Action Zone. There have been considerable changes in staffing in the last two years and the school currently has an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. Inspection evidence confirms the school's overall view of its provision.

Children make good progress in the Reception year, particularly in personal and social development. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school as a result of good teaching and the good care, guidance and support that the school provides for all its pupils. Personal development is good because of the opportunities that the school provides both through the curriculum and the good range of extra-curricular activities. The school makes good use of its links with other schools and agencies and has the support of the great majority of parents. Behaviour is excellent as a result of the common values that the school has established and the consistent approach teachers bring to caring for pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher has set a clear direction for the school's improvement based on a realistic evaluation of the school's performance. The system of training, monitoring and support by the curriculum coordinators has played a major part in dealing with the underachievement seen in the 2005 national test results. Because the strategies to raise standards are beginning to bite, and noticeable improvements can be seen, the school has the capacity for further improvement. Although governors provide good support for the school, they have not held it to account for its performance rigorously enough. Standards, after some years of decline, are now much as they were at the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue efforts to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve facilities for outdoor learning and play.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards. They make good progress in the Reception year and by the time they enter Year 1, almost all are reaching the standards expected for their age.

Until 2005, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were consistently above local and national averages, although showing a declining trend over recent years. In 2005, results in English and mathematics showed a sharp decline and targets were missed because of underachievement by a substantial number of pupils. Although close to average, results in Year 2 tests were also lower than in previous years. The school has established that standards and achievement throughout the school were affected by long term staffing difficulties, particularly in the last two years, and issues of teaching and learning. Work seen during the inspection indicates that the school is correct in its view that the difficulties have been resolved effectively. Pupils are now achieving well as a result of the school's consistent approach to teaching and learning that has

been established through training, monitoring and support. The strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy is working well; there has been a particular improvement in writing as a result of management initiatives. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and minority groups, make equally good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges the pupils' personal development to be outstanding. Inspectors judge it to be good with some outstanding features. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Children in the Reception year work happily together. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attitudes to learning are good. They show good awareness of world religions and different cultures. The strong emphasis on developing independence has enabled pupils throughout the school to become confident and, as some parents commented, 'to have the determination to do well'. They know how to keep healthy and understand the need to adopt safe habits. Bullying rarely occurs and any incidents are dealt with swiftly. Older pupils stated quite firmly 'we don't stand for any racism'. They show good awareness of the world about them and a well developed understanding of the needs of others. They are given very good opportunities to reflect on the effect of their own actions. The members of the school council represent their classmates well. The good development of basic skills prepares pupils for the future. Their involvement in fundraising helps to develop their citizenship skills. Attendance figures are close to average and improving. The school has worked hard to improve the attendance of a small group of pupils who are frequently absent. However, some parents persist in taking holidays in term time with an adverse impact on learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils make good progress as a result of teachers' consistent expectations of work and behaviour. The great majority of lessons are planned well with a variety of activities that keep pupils interested and maintain pace. Classroom management is good, based on mutual respect, so that little time is wasted in managing behaviour. In the best lessons, teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves by using skilful questioning. They make effective links to earlier work and are good at reinforcing learning. As a result, pupils respond well; almost all are confident and eager learners. Learning support assistants are usually well briefed so that they are able to take an active part in lessons and contribute well to pupils' learning. In lessons seen that were satisfactory rather than good, pace slackened and learning slowed because planning did not take sufficient account of pupils' needs and what they already knew.

As a result of initiatives aimed at raising standards and achievement, teachers use assessment well to track pupils' progress. Older pupils gain much in understanding how to improve from being involved in assessing their own work and that of their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. Provision in the Reception classes is good. Creativity and enjoyment are successfully promoted and pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is developed well. The good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) promotes pupils' understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' health and social skills are promoted through a rich programme of physical activities and the school holds a gold award for provision in sports. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented well, but the school has identified the need to adopt a more flexible approach to improve the provision for writing. Good opportunities are provided across all subjects to develop pupils' skills in using information and communication technology (ICT). Effective use is made of visitors and visits to enhance the curriculum; pupils greatly appreciated and had much fun learning dance routines during a session led by a Chinese visitor. There is a wide range of after school clubs that contribute to pupils' enjoyment and promote their physical fitness well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school provides a learning environment where pupils feel safe and valued. They know which adult they can turn to for help. No evidence was found to support the concern raised by a parent about the way the school deals with pupils who have medical complaints. The parents of one pupil commented that they 'have been astounded by the level of care received on an educational and emotional level'. Procedures for child protection are rigorously implemented. Parents are happy with the arrangements for settling children in the Reception year. There is good guidance for pupils who have difficulty in building friendships. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to participate fully in lessons. Teachers know what pupils can do and pupils are aware of their targets. Sound guidance is given to pupils in lessons and through marking to aid improvement.

Supervision during playtimes and lunchtimes is good. There are regular health and safety checks on the school buildings and grounds, and equipment is well maintained. However, the facilities for outdoor play are not good enough. Although the school takes care of pupils' safety, aspects of the school site over which it does not have direct control require attention.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The staffing difficulties that contributed to declining standards over recent years and underachievement in 2005 have been resolved. Robust action has led to a significant improvement in standards and achievement. The acting headteacher's vision for the highest achievement for all is shared by an effective team of teachers. Provision for children under five is well managed.

The school has effective systems for checking how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve. Following an analysis of test results in 2005 the school development plan was modified and curriculum coordinators were involved in shaping specific action plans to raise standards in writing and mathematics. The strategies implemented have resulted in a marked improvement in writing and mathematics throughout the school. Financial planning is good; the priorities that focus on raising achievement are well funded.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive but they acknowledge that they have not held the school to account with sufficient rigour in the recent past. They are now very aware of what needs to be done to raise standards; the chair meets with the acting headteacher on a regular basis to support her monitoring of pupils' progress.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	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

As you know, a team of inspectors visited your school to check on how well it is doing.

Thank you very much for the way you welcomed us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in the school. We were very impressed by the courtesy and help you gave us. We agree with you that yours is a good school. It is a safe and happy place where everyone can enjoy learning.

The best things about the school are:

- you are taught well so that you make good progress
- everyone in the school cares for you all very well so that you get help with any difficulties
- you know a great deal about how to live healthily and lots about other cultures
- your behaviour is excellent, in and out of lessons; you get on well together and help each other
- there are lots of extra activities that you enjoy.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make your school a better place to learn. These are:

- to keep trying to improve your learning in literacy and numeracy (you can help with this by always doing your best)
- to improve the facilities for outdoor learning and play.

Thank you for helping us with our work. We hope that you carry on enjoying lessons and continue to help the staff to make Woodchurch Road an even better place to learn.