



Pewithall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111141
LEA Halton
Inspection number 278606
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Michael McIlroy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kenilworth Avenue
School category	Community		Runcorn
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheshire WA7 4XQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01928 576139
Number on roll	204	Fax number	01928 581737
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Payton
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs C Minshall

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Pewithall Primary School is situated in a suburb of Runcorn, in an area of broadly average social and economic circumstances. The school is smaller than average. Just over 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average, and there are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. Pupils enter the school with the skills and knowledge expected of children of their age. The school has won the Healthy Schools Award and a number of local awards for its good sports provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pewithall Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Some aspects are outstanding, such as the personal development of pupils.

Pupils achieve well. They build on their excellent start in the Reception class and make good progress from Years 1 to 6. Results of the national tests and assessments have been consistently above average since the last inspection. In the 2005 Year 6 tests, however, fewer pupils than in previous years reached the higher Level 5 due to weaknesses in their writing.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides clear direction, although the monitoring and evaluation of how well pupils are doing requires some strengthening. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is good overall. Pupils in the Foundation Stage learn very well as the result of outstanding teaching.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. This is partly because of the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The curriculum is good. It meets the needs of pupils and provides effective opportunities to enrich their experiences. The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are outstanding.

The school has made very strong improvements since the last inspection. It has excellent links with other organisations and agencies and demonstrates good capacity to improve. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning more rigorous.
- Provide more challenge for the higher attaining pupils, particularly in writing at Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges achievement and standards to be good and inspectors agree. Pupils are given a good start to their education; they enter the reception class with average standards in all areas of learning and make excellent progress. In Key Stage 1 they continue to make strong progress, achieving above average standards by the age of 7.

Overall, standards at Key Stage 2 have been above average for the last two years. In 2005, results in English dipped because fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in writing. The school recognised this and took action that is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of the pupils' writing.

In lessons visited by inspectors pupils made good progress overall, although occasionally some of the older pupils could have been challenged more. The school met most of its challenging targets in 2005. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress during their time in school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exceptional. Spiritual growth is fostered very well through religious education and assemblies. Pupils show growing knowledge about world religions and different cultures. Behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Pupils move sensibly and quietly around the school and are keen, helpful and enthusiastic in lessons. Incidents of bullying or racism are extremely rare, and pupils demonstrate that they know how to handle these if they should occur. Pupils make healthy choices about their lifestyle and are very aware of safety issues. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with adults. They have good opportunities to exercise responsibility as play leaders and as road safety officers. They diligently carry out these responsibilities. They participate eagerly in fundraising for many causes which demonstrates their commitment to the needs of others. Each year senior citizens, including residents from a nearby old people's home, are invited to a school pantomime in which every pupil is involved. The elected school council discusses and makes decisions on important issues. The school adopted its suggestion of a 'buddy bench' in the playground which has ensured children always have someone to play with.

The good development of their basic skills contributes well to pupils' economic well-being. Pupils enjoy everything about the school and are proud of it. Attendance is good. The school does all it can to discourage holidays being taken during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall. Characteristics of the better lessons were good subject knowledge and effective planning which enabled pupils of varying abilities to build on previous learning. The lessons moved at a brisk pace that kept the pupils' interest. Teachers explained clearly what children had to learn. Very good use of interactive whiteboards and classroom computers made lessons exciting, imaginative and enjoyable. In an outstanding lesson, superb teamwork between the adults enabled children to make rapid progress in both teacher-directed and independent learning activities.

In some lessons teachers tended to talk for too long which slowed the pace of learning, and work was less well matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly for the more able.

Teachers made good use of skilled teaching assistants in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school places a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic literacy skills, although some opportunities to use these across all subjects are missed.

Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning. They work very well together and independently, and exhibit excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils listen and concentrate well. This good learning is grounded in the exemplary relationships which exist between pupils and adults in the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils. There is an appropriate focus on the core subjects and emphasis on information and communications technology (ICT). An internet learning link exists with a school in Japan and pupils are taught computing skills in the school's ICT suite. These are well applied in other subjects in the classroom. Physical education (PE) is a recognised strength of the school and pupils receive the recommended two hours of PE each week through a range of activities such as sports, swimming and games. In addition, pupils enjoy a wide range of extra curricular activities, which include badminton and table tennis. The school has won a number of awards for its good provision in PE.

Educational visits and visitors to the school, including industrialists from the nearby technology park, enrich pupils' experiences. The school undertakes two residential visits each year for older pupils. Modern foreign languages are taught in collaboration with the nearby technology college, where a number of pupils have attended a summer school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. There are excellent arrangements that help pupils settle quickly into the Reception class and when they transfer from one class to another. Close links with the nearby technology college enable pupils to be prepared carefully for the next phase of their education. In lessons, good quality guidance about learning enables pupils to understand how well they are achieving and what to do in order to improve their work. A close relationship with parents, and where necessary other professional agencies, ensures pupils are very well supported. Parents' evenings are attended well and useful information on pupils' progress is provided.

The school is rigorous in doing all it can to keep pupils safe from harm. Risks to health and safety are assessed carefully. Child protection procedures are well understood by all staff. Sex education and the dangers of alcohol, drugs and smoking are discussed sensitively with pupils to help them make sensible choices in later life. Pupils are

encouraged to eat healthily and the extensive programme for physical education, including yoga and table tennis, motivates pupils to take regular exercise. There is excellent care for pupils with medical conditions or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges the quality of leadership and management to be outstanding. Inspectors found it to be good.

The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school based on her knowledge of its work. Her self-evaluation is good. She has successfully resolved the issues raised in the last inspection report concerning ICT and assessment. The headteacher has developed the inclusive, caring ethos that pervades the school and influences the personal development of pupils so positively. There is good capacity for the school to improve.

Links with agencies that work with the school are very effective. Parents are consulted about future school developments. They appreciate the very strong partnership between themselves and the school. One parent spoke movingly of the headteacher's welcome to become part of the 'Pewithall family'.

At all levels in the school there is a strong commitment to providing pupils with the best education. Expectations are high and the school is committed to improvement; an example of this was the action taken to identify and remedy the causes of the dip in English results following last year's Year 6 tests. New assessment procedures have further improved the tracking of pupils' progress and the targeting of underperformance.

The Foundation Stage coordinator leads her area well and subject leadership is good. Subject leaders gain understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject areas through the scrutiny of pupils' books and by talking to pupils about their work. Although there is a good level of professional dialogue between staff, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not always sufficiently rigorous for issues affecting teaching and learning to be identified early and rectified.

There is good teamwork between staff, including effective support for new teachers that has enabled the school to cope successfully with recent changes in staff. Good use is made of opportunities to develop teachers' expertise, including the sharing of skills in classrooms.

Governance of the school is good and they visit the school frequently. They provide effective support for the headteacher and hold the school to account for its performance. The school provides good value for money.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	1	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	2	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

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when we inspected your school recently. I am writing to let you know some of the things we saw during our visit.

There are many good things at your school. Some of the best things we saw were:

- your behaviour is excellent and you are polite and kind to each other and visitors
- you are well taught by your teachers
- you are very well looked after by your teachers and other adults at school
- you get lots of help about how to do better in your work
- you enjoy school and know how to live healthily and stay safe.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make the school even better. We would like the school to:

- carry out more regular visits to classes to see that all of you are learning well and to see how things can be made even better for you
- improve the writing which you do in literacy and other subjects
- provide harder work for those of you who are more able.

Once again, many thanks for your help and politeness when we visited your school.