



Childwall Valley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134210
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 282489
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr George Crowther CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Craighurst Road
School category	Community		Liverpool
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Merseyside L25 1NW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 722 2544
Number on roll	135	Fax number	0151 738 1664
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Owen
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Kevin Basnett

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Childwall Valley opened in September 2003 as part of the Fresh Start scheme, with a new headteacher and teaching staff. It is a smaller than average primary school that serves an area of considerable social disadvantage. Children's attainment when they start school is well below average and, for some, very low. A high proportion of children is eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Almost all the children are from white British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic heritages but none is at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Childwall Valley is a good school with outstanding features. Since it opened in 2003, the children's achievement has improved steadily because expectations are high and the environment for learning is very positive. The school has a very clear picture of its own effectiveness and is exceptionally well placed to bring about further improvement. It provides good value for money.

Often from low starting points, children make good progress across the school. Particular strengths are the very good progress children make in the Foundation Stage and children's progress in mathematics and science from Year 3 to Year 6. In 2005, progress in English was unsatisfactory, but the school is tackling weaknesses in children's writing skills successfully, and progress has improved. Children of all abilities and from all backgrounds make good progress.

Children's personal development is good. They enjoy school and say that lessons are interesting and fun. Behaviour is very good. Despite having improved recently, attendance is below average and too many children arrive late to school. The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are interesting and challenging. Children are encouraged to enjoy their learning and teachers have high expectations of achievement. The curriculum is good, well-planned and meets the diversity of children's needs effectively. Exceptional provision in the Foundation Stage gives children a flying start at school.

Leaders and managers have a strong determination to continue improving children's achievement. This is matched by a very clear view of what needs to be done. The headteacher plays a key role in driving up standards, and the staff are a cohesive team that has the skills to succeed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by seeing through the good strategies already in place.
- Improve children's attendance and punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many children start school with weak basic skills. Since the school opened, the children have been making good progress. Those in the current Year 6 have done well to reach broadly average standards.

Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage because the staff provide stimulating activities and support each child's learning effectively. By the time children join Year 1, many are now reaching average standards. The older children, however, did not have this very good start to school. During Years 1 to 6, progress is consistently good, which is a significant strength. Children achieve particularly well in Year 6 and are reaching the challenging targets set for them. In 2005, results of the Year 2 national

tests were broadly average. Progress from Year 3 to Year 6 was good in mathematics and science, but unsatisfactory in English. The school identified and is tackling weaknesses in children's writing skills. Current progress in English shows a marked improvement and standards in Year 6 are average. Children make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and by Year 6 standards are above average. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Work is well matched to their needs and they get very good support from the staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children are very positive about school. They say, 'We like learning things in lessons because it's interesting and fun'. For example, children in Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed editing a video for their digital portfolio. Occasionally, children find it hard to concentrate and get on with their work. Children behave very well and relationships are very positive. One child said, 'I like everyone in school because we are all friends.' Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A rich range of experiences, such as a link with a school in Australia, develops children's understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. The school has been driving up attendance successfully, but it is still below average. Too many children arrive late to school.

Children develop a good sense of their own well-being. They know how to make healthy choices in the food they eat and the exercise they take. Children feel safe at school. One child said, 'I can talk to a teacher if I have a problem, so I know I'm safe.' The children also know how to stay safe out of school. They express their opinions confidently and they say the staff listen. For example, the school council raised the issue of hygiene at lunch time, which led to improvements. Most children have a class job. Special responsibilities for the older children, such as looking after the younger ones, give them an understanding of contributing to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. They are outstanding in the Foundation Stage and Year 6, owing to particularly high expectations of the progress children can make. All lessons are planned very carefully, which leads to confident teaching and good learning. Lively, engaging teaching makes the children eager to learn. For example, a variety of mathematics activities on the interactive whiteboard motivated Year 4 and 5 children. Teachers usually get the best from the children because relationships are very positive. Most lessons have a good balance of activities but, occasionally, the whole-class session lasts too long and the pace of learning slows. Work is almost always challenging. Children work well when supported by teachers and teaching assistants, but

independent work is not always managed so that children make the best progress possible.

Outstanding systems for assessing children's attainment and tracking their progress help the school to raise standards. They have a direct impact on children's learning, such as the current strategies to improve writing that stemmed from a thorough analysis of children's work. Setting targets for children's expected progress, and sharing these with parents, places a strong focus on success. Careful assessment of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the setting of precise learning targets help them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good range of activities and experiences, with some outstanding features, meets the children's needs well. The curriculum is carefully planned and organised, which helps children to build their skills and knowledge quickly. An exceptional Foundation Stage curriculum has a rich range of experiences that helps the children to make very good progress in all aspects of their learning. The curriculum for information and communication technology is very good. A strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy is complemented well by other work. For example, Creativity Weeks enrich the curriculum, and lessons in Spanish provide an extra dimension to children's learning. Activities outside lessons are good in range and quality. The children's good personal development owes much to a strong programme of personal, social and health education.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very successfully. These children are involved, appropriately, in all the school has to offer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Levels of care are outstanding. Many children need extra support because of difficulties in their lives. All the staff work hard to ensure each child is safe, happy and ready to learn. The Learning Mentor plays a key role in supporting both children and staff. The children say they feel safe and cared for in school because, 'The teachers help you if you get hurt or you're unhappy'. This confidence in the care staff provide makes a strong contribution to children's personal development. Staff implement effectively the clear procedures for first aid and child protection, and are vigilant about health and safety matters.

Children's academic progress is monitored frequently and the information is used very effectively to ensure that each child is doing as well as possible. Teachers have a good awareness of children's individual needs and what they should be learning next. They provide good guidance to help children improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some aspects that are outstanding. Since the school opened, there has been a steady improvement in the children's achievement. This has been driven forward by the very clear vision and strong determination of the headteacher, well supported by senior staff and shared by the school community. The younger children, in particular, now make very good progress; however, improvements have not yet impacted in a similar way on the achievement of the older ones, for example, in English. Leaders have an exceptionally good understanding of how children's learning can improve further, based on accurate evaluations of the school's performance. In this way, the school uses what it knows about children's existing achievement to raise standards. For example, careful analysis of children's work identified weaknesses in writing skills and targeted action has led to significant improvement. Lessons, teachers' planning and children's work are monitored carefully, and action is taken to improve children's learning. The school improvement plan is wide ranging and provides a very clear way forward. All these strengths put the school in an exceptionally good position to improve further.

The views of parents, pupils and other members of the school community are sought and acted upon. The school is very successful in ensuring that all children are fully involved in learning and school life, whatever their background, ability or particular needs. Governors provide considerable support and have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions about the school's performance.

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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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	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	2	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	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	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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

I visited your school last week to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for being helpful when I asked you questions. I enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and finding out about the things you like doing.

I think there are lots of very good things about your school. There are also two ways in which your learning could be even better. The things I particularly like are:

- your school is a very happy place to be because everyone gets on well together
- everyone is very caring - I liked it when the older children looked after the younger ones
- you are very well behaved and very friendly towards visitors
- you have a good understanding about being healthy and staying safe
- there are lots of interesting things to do in lessons and you enjoy your learning
- you are working hard and getting better all the time
- the children in the Foundation Stage learn new things very quickly
- you are particularly good at working with computers
- I was impressed that some of you are learning Spanish
- the links you have with schools in other parts of the world are very interesting
- around the school, there are lots of attractive displays of your work
- you enjoy activities outside lessons - even though football was cancelled owing to rain!

I would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn.

- You have been working hard to improve your writing and many of you have already been successful. You need to keep on improving your writing because it is a very important skill you will need in the future.

- Some children have too many days off school, and some arrive late too often. These children need to be at school all the time, and on time, so that they can get the best from their learning.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. Please share this letter with the other children. I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Childwall Valley a good place to be.