



# Matthew Arnold Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104557  
**Local Authority** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 286977  
**Inspection dates** 4–5 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mark Madeley

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Dingle Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Merseyside L8 9UB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2334900
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	202	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 7260803
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Dr H O'Sullivan
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Gary Mason
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 4–5 October 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 286977
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area of predominantly rented housing bordering the River Mersey to the south of Liverpool city centre. It is housed in a new building, which is part of a complex of childcare and other community facilities which are managed by the headteacher and governing body. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. More than half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has a much higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many of these are educated in the school's specialist provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties. At the time of the inspection this facility had 20 pupils on roll.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It does a truly wonderful job in meeting the needs of all its pupils and provides outstanding value for money. The school knows that it is highly effective but was too modest in all sections of its self-evaluation. Dynamic leadership from the governing body and headteacher has improved standards significantly since the last inspection. The school has established very beneficial links with the onsite Pupils' Centre, many support agencies, local schools and charities. All pupils and most parents like their school very much. A small minority of parents have some concerns about the school and feel that their views are not taken fully into account.

Attainment on entry is very low. Pupils get a good start in the Foundation Stage classes. 'I was amazed at how quickly my child overcame her shyness and started to enjoy learning,' was the comment of one parent, reflecting the views of the vast majority. An effective mix of direct teaching and play activities helps pupils make good progress. Consistent teaching of at least good quality through Years 1 to 6 helps pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils are challenged at every stage because assessment data are used exceptionally well to monitor their progress and plan their learning. Some teachers mark pupils' work very well, but this aspect of teaching lacks consistency across the school. Pupils in some classes do not know how to improve their work. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain average standards.

The school captures pupils' interest through a high quality curriculum. A very good range of visits to places of educational interest and additional theme weeks sparks pupils' interest and broadens their experience and vocabulary. Pupils know how to stay fit and healthy and take good advantage of the wide range of after-school clubs on offer. A very strong emphasis is put on pupils knowing how to stay safe. Pupils are well prepared for their next school.

The governing body has a clear view of what it wants for the pupils and with the headteacher has made astute staff appointments to bring this view to reality. The headteacher has developed a high quality team of staff who share his vision for the pupils. Collectively, they create a calm and ordered school in which everyone can learn. They want all pupils to fulfil their potential and work exceptionally hard to achieve this aim. The excellent track record of improvement and the efficient self-evaluation procedures indicate that this school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

This school is highly inclusive. It cares particularly well for every pupil. It welcomes and works effectively with pupils from other schools who have often had a difficult time. Pupils in the language unit are effectively taught, make outstanding progress and are well integrated into the school. Other pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make outstanding progress because they are very well supported in school and their education is very carefully planned.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently tells pupils how to improve their work.

- Improve communication with parents.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

All pupils achieve exceptionally well. Many pupils join school with very weak language skills, little experience of the world around them and poor social skills. Well organised and purposeful activities help pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They join Year 1 with attainment which is below national expectations. Despite good work by Foundation Stage staff, many children continue to have weaknesses in their language skills. Intensive support for reading and writing in Key Stage 1 helps pupils make good progress and improve these skills. They join Year 3 with standards which are slightly below average. Standards in Key Stage 1 have improved markedly over the last four years.

Pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 is outstanding and in the top 5% of schools nationally. High quality teaching, intensive target setting and frequent monitoring of pupils' progress are the key contributing factors. Pupils reach standards in the national tests for English, mathematics and science which are average. Standards have been rising for three years. The school has exceeded its targets for the last three years. These were suitably challenging when set.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make impressive progress. They receive very skilled support, especially those who are supported by the language unit. One measure of the school's success with these pupils is that it achieved its best ever Key Stage 2 results in 2006 when half of the pupils entered had some degree of learning difficulty and/or disability.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school's inclusive and caring ethos is at the heart of promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy school, feel safe and know that any bullying will be dealt with promptly. A small minority of parents do not share the pupils' view that bullying is rare. The respect pupils have for each other, adults and school property shows how well the school promotes moral values. They work hard to raise funds for others and the school council is very active in promoting pupils' views. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities they are given to develop cooperative and teamwork skills that will stand them in good stead in the future. Behaviour is good and sometimes excellent. This was demonstrated particularly well during the inspection when it rained at lunchtime and the pupils had to stay indoors. The vast majority of pupils show a genuine desire to learn. This attitude is reflected in the increased, though currently only satisfactory, attendance figures, which the school has worked hard to improve. One pupil commented, 'we'll reach 100% soon!'

The school's successful efforts in teaching pupils how to stay healthy and safe have earned it several awards and the approval of parents. The pupils are well aware of other cultures and respect the beliefs of others. In addition to very good social skills, the pupils' acquisition of basic skills, including computing, prepares them very well for the next school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and is exemplary in many aspects. It leads to pupils making exceptional progress. Classrooms are orderly places where all pupils can learn because the system of rewards and sanctions is used consistently. Assessment information is used exceptionally well to plan the next stage in pupils' learning. Teachers provide clear explanations of tasks, which enable pupils to set to work quickly. Pupils learn well by 'doing', as in the Year 4 science lesson on making switches for circuits. In this lesson, pupils not only diagnosed faults in their circuits but also shared knowledge and experiences with classmates very well.

In the Foundation Stage, staff use every moment as a learning experience. For example, while they change from a physical education lesson, the teacher engages pupils in a discussion on healthy eating and drinking water.

Pupils develop better speech habits in the language unit because teachers provide them with models of clear and accurate speech to copy.

Assessment information is used exceptionally well to monitor pupils' progress each term. Teachers revise the way pupils are grouped and set each pupil learning targets for the coming term. Tasks set in lessons are closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils who need extra support, or those who need greater challenge, are identified and helped or challenged.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. The very strong emphasis given to the development of literacy and numeracy skills has seen standards rise over the last five years. Careful planning ensures that the teaching of academic skills and personal development is seamless. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well planned and is firmly based on pupils learning through play activities.

Pupils learn a great deal and really enjoy the themed weeks, such as the recent arts week. One commented, 'we are still learning but we don't realise it because it's a different way of doing things.' French is also popular and pupils are very willing to demonstrate their skills. They appreciate the good selection of clubs; the drama, dance and football clubs being particular favourites. Visits, including the excellent range of

residential visits, and visitors, who share their beliefs and expertise, increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning as well as enriching the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school takes outstanding care of all its pupils. Very good relationships between pupils and adults ensure that pupils feel safe and know that there is someone to turn to if help is needed. They say that bullying is rare and always 'nipped in the bud'. One commented, 'We look out for each other in this school.' Health and safety, child protection and risk assessments are in place and the school follows national guidelines when appointing staff.

Support for the above average number of pupils who have learning difficulties is very good and this enables them to meet the targets in their individual educational plans. Pupils' academic progress is tracked thoroughly. Targets for literacy and numeracy motivate pupils well. They say it reminds them of what they need to do to improve. Sometimes pupils do not know how to improve their work because some teachers' marking, whilst satisfactory, does not consistently offer ways to make the work better. The majority of parents feel that they are well informed about their pupils' achievements through parents' evenings, reports and Family Learning Weeks but a small minority would like more information.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Excellent partnership by the governing body and headteacher has transformed pupils' learning. Highly effective future planning and carefully considered appointments of new staff have played a vital part in raising pupils' standards. Good quality information about how well the school is performing and how well pupils are progressing is collected and used effectively to bring about improvements in teaching and the curriculum.

The staff have worked very hard to achieve the school's priority of creating a calm and orderly place where pupils are able to learn and develop in a safe environment. The majority of parents are very positive about the school and the high quality extended services it offers to the pupils and the community. A small minority have concerns about aspects of the school's work. The inspection team finds that their concerns are unfounded but that parents could be better informed about the high quality provision the school offers their pupils.

The school is highly inclusive. It is particularly successful, for instance, in helping pupils who have experienced problems in other schools to learn and to control their emotions. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed and the pupils are supported very effectively.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for helping us with our inspection. We got a lot of valuable information from talking to you and used it when we decided on how good your school was. We think that your school is outstanding; not perfect but really, really good. It is a very calm and ordered place and all staff work very hard to help you learn. By the time you leave in Year 6 you have made outstanding progress. You have an excellent headteacher and group of governors who had big ideas for your school. By planning well and working hard together, they have developed your school into the wonderful place it is today. They have done this for you and for all the community.

You 'do your bit' to make your school outstanding. You behave well, are keen to learn and work hard at the tasks set for you in lessons. When asked, you chat in pairs or help each other with exercises or experiments really well. You know a lot about staying safe in school and in the community. The pupils we sat with at lunch told us all about how to live a healthy life and many of you made healthy choices at the lunch counter. You, and most of your parents, agree with us that your school is doing a great job of educating you.

We have asked your headteacher to do two things which will make your school even better.

- Make sure that teachers' marking tells you how to improve your work further.
- Keep your parents and carers fully informed about school life.

You can help your school improve by coming to school regularly, trying hard at your work and explaining clearly how you got your answers when your teacher asks you.

We really enjoyed our time at your school and thank you all for the help you gave us. We wish you and your school well for the future.