

# Parish CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104793
<b>Local Authority</b>	St. Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	287037
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Mason
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Charles Street St Helens Merseyside WA10 1LW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678430
<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678430

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Almost all pupils in this average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and few pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school roll increased significantly in 2006, mainly resulting from the closure of a school nearby. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Award and the Local Authority's Quality Kitemark for the Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher is acting headteacher, after the previous headteacher left to take another headship. A new headteacher has been appointed to start in the new school year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education and pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. From levels of attainment that are generally well below those expected of children on entry to the Reception class, they reach standards that are above the national average by the end of Year 6. This has been the case for the last five years. The predicted attainment of the current Year 6 is not as high, however, with only a few pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in each subject and this is because of the nature of the year group.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school very much, behave very well and develop a good awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted particularly well by the strong links with the parish and is good. The school gives priority to doing its best for all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils and the very few learning English as an additional language make good progress and are helped to take a full part in the life of the school. Levels of attendance are below average, however. A concerted effort by the school to address the poor attendance and punctuality of a minority of pupils, which has an adverse impact on their progress. This initiative has had a positive impact only in the past few months.

Provision for the care, guidance and support of all pupils is good. There are outstanding features in the excellent partnerships with agencies and other schools to promote the well-being of pupils and in initiatives to support more vulnerable pupils who lack self-confidence and self-esteem. The procedures to identify and track the academic progress of pupils have been revised in recent years and are good. Information gathered from these assessments, however, is not used to confirm how effective the school's additional teaching programmes are, which are intended to bolster the progress of less able pupils.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good. Strengths of the teaching include the varied nature of lessons, which have good use of interactive whiteboards and pupils working together effectively in groups on investigations. Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and effort. Pupils listen and concentrate well. The curriculum has a good emphasis on basic skills and is enriched by 'themed days' that involve the whole school. An outstanding feature is the extensive range of clubs and visits the pupils enjoy as well as opportunities afforded by the Before and After School clubs. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Provision for the most able, gifted and talented pupils is in the process of development and not yet fully in place.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher are leading school improvement effectively during the current period of transition. The school's procedures to monitor and evaluate how well it is doing are good and give an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a good understanding of how the school is performing. Parents have very positive views of the school and appreciate what the school does for their children. Typical comments are: 'The manners instilled in the children by the school are a joy to behold in this day and age,' and 'I would have no hesitation in recommending the school to others, as indeed I have!'

Progress since the last inspection indicates a clear capacity to improve. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is just below the national average and given the achievement of pupils and the quality of provision, the school provides good value for money.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of attendance and punctuality by adopting a more rigorous approach to improving the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils.
- Develop provision for the most able, gifted and talented pupils.
- Make better use of assessment information to track the effectiveness of the school's additional teaching programmes.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class progress well in their learning so that by the end of the year, most reach levels expected of them in all areas of development. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good and the effective focus on encouraging the children to write means that children are confident to have a go in this aspect of their learning. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 are usually above average. In 2006, standards were below average and this was because of the nature of that year group with one third of pupils having learning difficulties. The standards in the current Year 2 are in line with the national average.

Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and for the past five years, standards have been consistently above average. Changes in both the school population and staffing have meant that achievement in some current Key Stage 2 classes is not as strong as in the past. Above average mobility of pupils during Key Stage 2 led to the reorganisation of some classes during 2006 but effective staff teamwork has ensured continuing good achievement. The school usually meets its challenging targets.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic, take pride in their school and have very good relationships with one another and with staff. Behaviour is very good and pupils are polite and very well-mannered. They say bullying is rare and know what to do if they have concerns. The level of exclusions has been high in the past and has reduced significantly this year through the school developing effective strategies to tackle the disruptive behaviour of a small number of pupils. Pupils have a good awareness of how to look out for one another, be safe themselves and live a fit and healthy lifestyle. Pupils take on responsibilities very well, for example, as school councillors, house captains and 'bully busters'. They learn how to work independently and as a team, which are important skills to take forward to high school. Pupils take part in a number of community events such as developing facilities at a local park. They learn about business enterprise and this also helps their self-confidence.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the age range. Strong features include the positive relationships staff have with their pupils, which mean pupils cooperate and learn well. In the best lessons, interactive whiteboards and personal computers are used very effectively. Teachers make classrooms interesting and attractive through vibrant displays of pupils' work which

encourage pupils to learn from each other. Good support from teaching assistants contributes well to the work of small groups of less able pupils. At times, however, they are not used effectively enough when teachers are introducing lessons to the whole class. Teachers' planning clearly identifies learning objectives for lessons and the marking of pupils' work is constructive. In English especially, marking moves their learning forward well. This is not as evident in mathematics.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and offers pupils a wide range of interesting opportunities including learning German. Pupils enjoy 'themed days' in subjects such as science, art and technology. Pupils' understanding of other cultures was improved through a recent 'Austria Day'. There is an outstanding range of activities outside lessons, visitors, visits and residential experiences for pupils to enjoy. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good, as is provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which includes additional programmes of work led by teaching assistants. The school has made a start in providing specifically for the most able and talented pupils but this is yet to have full impact on their learning. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' awareness of personal safety and a healthy lifestyle, for example, through personal and social education, physical education and swimming, as well as the many clubs and coaching sessions outside lessons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

These aspects are well-established strengths of the school and an outstanding feature is the length the school goes to in order to care for the pupils' well-being. The school identifies the needs of pupils very well and is host to a 'nurture group' for the youngest pupils, which promotes self-esteem very successfully and generates positive links with families. All aspects of health, safety, child protection and safe recruitment of staff are in place. There are good links between the pre-school playgroup that operates in the building and an effective programme of transition between the Reception class and Year 1 has been implemented for the first time this year. The school has a number of good links with parents including workshops that have a positive impact on parenting skills and on how pupils perform. Procedures to track the progress of pupils are used effectively to identify which pupils need support. The information gathered from this tracking, however, is not used well enough yet to measure how effective provision is, especially the additional teaching programmes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The temporary leadership team of acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by one senior staff member, has focused well on the importance of maintaining the quality of education during the current period of transition. It has also continued to make improvements. The commitment to helping all pupils to achieve their potential is evident in the high profile given to it by the senior management and the strong teamwork of the staff. The school's view of itself is accurate and clearly reflects where it perceives improvements are necessary. It matches exactly the judgements in this inspection report. The school's three-year development plan is very detailed and involves a good measure of regular evaluation and readjustment as appropriate.

Governors support the school well and the chairperson provides very effective leadership. They challenge the senior staff effectively to account for the school's performance. For example, they highlighted concerns about the number of exclusions and their involvement has helped to reduce this.

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## Annex A

## 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Inspection of Parish Church of England Primary School, St Helens, WA10 1LW.

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now I would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

Yours is a good school, for instance:

- the staff take good care of you all and teach you well
- your attitude to lessons is good, you enjoy school and behave very well
- you are doing well in English, mathematics and science and making good progress
- the staff have excellent links with people in the community such as the police, sports coaches, schools and colleges to help you to achieve your best
- they provide you with outstanding opportunities to enjoy activities outside lessons and go on visits.

To make the school even better, there are a few important things to do and you can help. A few of you do not attend school regularly enough and this affects how well you do. We want to stress how important it is that you all attend school, so we are asking the school to do all it can in this matter. You must do your best too. The staff also need to plan challenging things for the most able and talented among you to do. We want them to check how effective are the additional lessons many of you have, for instance, when teaching assistants teach English and mathematics to small groups of pupils.