



# Waterloo Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 104870  
**Local Authority** Sefton  
**Inspection number** 287051  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Gordon Alston

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 address</b>	Crosby Road North
<b>School category</b>	Community		Waterloo, Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Merseyside L22 0LD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 9284274
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	404	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 9286803
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ms M Moss
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Baldwin (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is much bigger than most primary schools and serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. A very small number of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds but none are at the early stages of learning English. Children begin school with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age, with significant weaknesses in language. Attached to the school are three learning resource-based units for junior and infant pupils with moderate learning difficulties and a nurture base for infant pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has been through a very unsettled period caused by significant staffing and management changes. At present, there is an acting headteacher and two assistant headteachers; eight of the teachers have been appointed only recently.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Waterloo Primary School is a happy, caring community. It provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. Parents are very supportive of the school and value its commitment to the needs of every child. It has good links with partners to support pupils' well-being. Pupils behave extremely well and their personal development is good. They cooperate well with each other and take initiative: this prepares them well for their future lives. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe and healthy. They are well looked after, with staff providing good, sensitive care and support focusing on helping pupils form very good relationships. Consequently, pupils settle in to school quickly, develop positive attitudes to learning and feel that they have something to offer. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers really encourage you to try and do your best.'

After a period of significant instability caused by staffing and management changes an energetic acting headteacher has brought an infectious commitment to improvement among staff and pupils. 'Everyone's working together to improve our school,' one pupil commented. The school's national test results have fluctuated in recent years and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 declined in 2004 and 2005. Improving standards and achievement is a main priority for the school and a number of important changes have been implemented to this end. For instance, better systems for checking pupils' progress, teaching pupils in ability groups and providing additional support for pupils who need it are beginning to impact positively. Target setting for pupils has also been introduced, but the effectiveness of this initiative is inconsistent because pupils are not always sure of what their targets are. Nevertheless, the most recent test results, pupils' work, and school data on the progress of all year groups provide a convincing picture of improving achievement.

Children enter Reception with skills well below expectations. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the strong focus on language and learning through play. However, by the end of the year a significant number do not reach expected levels. While standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average, they reflect satisfactory progress given pupils' very low starting points. Nevertheless, the more able pupils could achieve more, especially in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is stronger in Year 6, where lessons have pace and pupils are motivated, are set challenging tasks and are expected to think for themselves. Elsewhere these good features are not seen as often, which results in pupils making variable progress. The most significant factor that stops satisfactory teaching from being good is a lack of accuracy in matching work to pupils' varying needs. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by visitors and visits to a range of interesting places, to make learning more meaningful. Pupils say they like to learn this way.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and there is an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The acting headteacher is highly committed to raising standards and has established a leadership team structure to

promote a stronger, more unified, whole-school approach to improvement. The impact of the team's work is beginning to show in the new initiatives being implemented, and subject leaders have made a good start at reviewing their areas of responsibility. Progress on issues since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in English, particularly writing, and mathematics, especially for the more able pupils
- Improve teaching to ensure that work is matched more accurately to pupils' needs
- Ensure that pupils understand their learning targets so that they know what to do to next to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Although children in Reception make good progress significant numbers do not reach expected levels in their language and number skills by the end of the year. By the end of Years 2 and 6, after a period of underachievement in the past, new initiatives have ensured that pupils now achieve satisfactorily over time. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from the attached units, make satisfactory progress. Recent results indicate that girls do better than boys. Recognising this, the school has introduced programmes aimed at improving boys' motivation. This is beginning to have an impact on their attitudes and achievement. The trends in test results for Years 2 and 6 pupils show a fluctuating picture. The most recent results for these year groups show below average standards in English, mathematics and science, but indicate an improved picture of achievement from the previous year. In English, writing was the weakest element, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving higher grades. The school has put a number of initiatives in place to raise pupils' standards and achievement, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and these are beginning to have a positive impact.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Attendance is broadly average but improving, reflecting the hard work of a highly skilled pastoral team in encouraging attendance. Pupils respond proudly when rewarded for good behaviour, for example when having lunch at the 'Golden table'. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to adopt healthy lifestyles. They also appreciate how well the school helps them to keep safe, through class discussions, assemblies, visiting police officers and theatre groups. Pupils say they enjoy lessons: one boy enthused, 'We actually get involved in doing science experiments for ourselves.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of helping others in both the local community and the wider world; for example when delivering

Harvest Festival gifts to the elderly and raising money for a range of charities. The strong focus on the teaching of basic skills helps to prepare children appropriately for the next phase of education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are good and in other classes are satisfactory with good features. Typical features include good relationships between teachers and pupils which encourage pupils to try hard and successfully complete work. Effective classroom management leads to good concentration among pupils and few disruptions. Classroom assistants provide good support. Recent initiatives, such as role-play and better assessment, have had a particularly good impact on improving the teaching of writing. The best lessons are exciting because tasks are interesting and allow pupils to use their initiative. The difficulty of the tasks increases continuously, which challenges pupils and sustains their interest. In some lessons, teachers do not actively involve pupils at the start of the lesson, resulting in passive learning. Procedures are in place for assessing pupils, but best use is not always made of this information so pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy or too difficult.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, not good as judged by the school. It meets statutory requirements and promotes pupils' personal skills well. Provision for the development of pupils' academic skills is satisfactory. Lessons are planned to enable pupils to consider tolerance, respect and acceptance of people's differences. Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects are developing. Good use is being made of links with other schools to raise standards, particularly in writing. For example, pupils in Year 6 are working on a Shakespeare project with a professional actor and this has proved particularly appealing to the boys. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, visitors and visits enriches the curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Levels of care are first rate and much appreciated by parents. They extend beyond the school day to the breakfast and after-school clubs, which pupils enjoy. Good relationships between staff, pupils and parents help to ensure that pupils are happy, safe and ready to learn. Pupils know that if needed, help is always available. Child protection procedures are effective and provision for safeguarding learners meets statutory requirements. Good links with a wide range of external agencies help the school provide specialist support when needed. Good provision is made for the transfer

of pupils to local secondary schools. The setting of targets in English and mathematics is in place but this has yet to fully impact on learning. This is because pupils do not always know their targets or understand what they have to do in order to achieve them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Many staff changes have disrupted school management, resulting in a decline in pupils' achievement. The acting headteacher, well supported by a newly appointed temporary senior management team, has quickly picked up the reins and re-established a clear vision for the school's future direction. The team's resilience for school improvement ensures that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. This is evident in the way that achievement, particularly by the end of Year 6, shows signs of improvement. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the welfare and well-being of all pupils are central to its work. Procedures for evaluating the school's performance are satisfactory and correctly identify strengths and weaknesses. Systems to check on the effectiveness of new initiatives are developing well. For example, new procedures to check on pupils' progress have raised teachers' expectations and are successfully identifying underachievement, resulting in appropriate support being provided. The school has many initiatives aimed at improving standards, but these are not fully embedded to have maximum impact. Governance is good; governors know their school and provide challenging and valuable support. They have done all within their powers to support the school through the period of tremendous staffing instability.

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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>	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

As you know three inspectors visited your school recently and we would like to thank you for talking to us, telling us about your school and making us feel so welcome. We looked at many of the things you do in school and talked with your teachers and some of the people who help you, as well as a few of your parents. We thought that you behaved very well and we could tell that you and your families are very proud of your school. The school provides you with a satisfactory education. These are some of the things that we decided were particularly good:

- the people in school work very hard to make sure that you learn how to be good, sensible and caring and you showed us that you can live up to their high expectations
- the adults in your school look after you well
- you behave very well in lessons and work sensibly
- you enjoy being with each other and get on well with the adults in school
- you are trying hard to be healthy and eat sensibly.

Everyone is working hard to improve your school so we have recommended a few important things that your school should concentrate on. We think that you could reach higher standards in English, particularly writing, and mathematics by the time you leave school. In order to achieve this we have asked your teachers to ensure that they plan work that really challenges all of you, especially those of you who pick up new things quickly. You can help by working hard and telling your teachers if work is too easy or too difficult. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you understand your targets so that you know how to improve your work.