



Bishop David Sheppard Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104942
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 287075
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Margot D'Arcy

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Devonshire Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Southport
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside PR9 7BZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01704 227987
Number on roll (school)	180	Fax number	01704 232698
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Jean Abram
		Headteacher	Mrs Stephanie Tasker
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007	Inspection number 287075
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools and is situated in an area of some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is above average. Most pupils are White British, but there are small numbers from a variety of minority ethnic groups. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times. A relatively high number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. Many children begin Nursery with standards that are well below those expected for their age. Children's personal and social skills and those in language and communication are especially weak. Along with many schools in the area, the number on roll has fallen significantly in recent years and this has resulted in a big reduction to staffing. A consequence has been that for the past 18 months the coordination of subjects has been undertaken by staff working groups, rather than individual coordinators. The school has achieved Investors In People and Eco status and has gained the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. From a well below average starting point, pupils reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Standards of personal development are also good and demonstrated by most pupils' good behaviour and enjoyment of school. These positive outcomes stem from the continuous and successful work the school does to help overcome the significant barriers to learning faced by many pupils. The excellent links that exist with a wide range of external agencies play a major part in this, ensuring that every aspect of pupils' needs are dealt with, thereby giving all the best opportunities possible to succeed. Alongside this, the school works relentlessly to encourage parents to play a greater role in their children's education and personal development, for example through the provision of family learning programmes in literacy and numeracy, and parenting courses. Children in the Foundation Stage are well provided for. Although many do not attain the expected learning goals by the end of Reception, progress in all areas is good. This is due to good teaching and the provision of activities that are well geared to children's needs, ensuring that they feel safe and enjoy learning. The school has noted a slowing of progress during Key Stage 1, resulting from too quick a move to a more formal curriculum. The impact of this is seen in the standards attained at the end of Year 2, which are well below average. To improve things, the school has adapted the curriculum at Key Stage 1 to make it more appropriate to pupils' needs. However, the initiative is still at an early stage of development and it is too early to see the full effect on pupils' standards. During Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in response to good teaching and a good curriculum. Moreover, here and throughout the school, the good quality of care, guidance and support also helps pupils cope with setbacks to their learning caused by, for example, moving schools or emotional issues linked to family upset. That pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with, and often marginally above, national averages shows the school's success in promoting pupils' all-round development. There are no major differences in how well different groups of pupils achieve, but the school has noted that boys do not do quite as well in reading as in other areas. Some efforts have been made to address this persistent issue, but not in any systematic way, so the disparity continues. Parents value the school's work and many particularly appreciate the way staff know their children as individuals. A significant minority have concerns about behaviour. The school has worked extremely hard, and successfully, to review its approach to behaviour and fully included pupils and parents in the process. While a small number of pupils have behavioural difficulties, these are managed very well by staff and rarely interrupt learning or result in major relationship problems between pupils. The school's good curriculum and high level of pastoral care and guidance ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of moral issues, such as bullying and racism, know how to keep safe and healthy, and are aware of the importance of giving something back to the community. For instance, members of the Eco council talk of how important it is to 'recycle things so as not to waste natural resources like water, or trees for making paper when we've got lots of it already'. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through extra-curricular clubs and visits to places of interest. However, not enough

emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' learning about cultures different to their own, resulting in this area of their personal development being less well developed than others. Similarly, while some efforts have been made to improve boys' interest in reading, this aspect of curriculum provision is not planned well enough. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The move to staff working groups for subject coordination is developing satisfactorily. There is a constant drive to provide the best for pupils and, with this in mind, good strategies are put in place to improve things. However, while their progress is monitored, the monitoring process is not as sharp as it could be in checking pupils' progress. The school has moved on well since its last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that curriculum provision focuses more specifically on ways of raising boys' achievement in reading and allows all pupils to gain a good understanding of cultures different to their own.
- Ensure that improvement initiatives are evaluated rigorously in relation to their impact on pupils' standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. From a low starting point they reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in activities that allow them to learn through play and use all their senses to understand new ideas. Children's good progress is enhanced by the staff's constant promotion of their personal and social development and communication skills. Nevertheless, standards on entry to Year 1 are still well below expectations in language and communication and in mathematical development. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but standards are not quite high enough by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, generally all groups of pupils in the school achieve well. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do those who speak English as an additional language. Indeed, the standards attained by this latter group are rarely any different to those of other pupils. While boys achieve well overall, they are capable of attaining better standards in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Standards of personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, are good. Cultural awareness is not as strong, though pupils are keen to learn about this area. Attendance is promoted well and has improved significantly this year, bringing standards in line with national averages. Overall, pupils are well

prepared for the future. They understand and adhere to the clear expectations of behaviour. This allows learning to proceed at a good pace and playtimes to be enjoyable occasions. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take on responsibilities. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones, and those on committees, such as the school and Eco councils, know that their views are taken seriously and influence what happens in school. For example, pupils have been fully involved in redesigning the playground and formulating a reward system. All gain a good understanding of democratic processes through the election of school councillors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, showing teachers' good knowledge of subjects and of pupils' individual needs. Overall, there is a good level of challenge for those who learn quickly and good support for those who find learning more difficult. Activities are generally planned well to motivate pupils, although on occasions at Key Stage 1 they are not practical enough to capture pupils' interest. Most teachers use questioning skills effectively to assess how well pupils are learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, particularly in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including leading specialised intervention programmes. Good support is also given to pupils at an early stage of learning English, helping them to gain skills in this area and to learn well across the curriculum. Support staff in the Foundation Stage make an extremely good contribution, including playing a full part in planning and assessing children's learning. Throughout the school, the friendly but firm relationships engendered by staff, including good management of behaviour, are key features supporting pupils' good learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and generally well matched to pupils' needs. In the Foundation Stage it is exciting, vibrant and very well focused on promoting children's independence, language and enjoyment. At Key Stage 1, recent modifications to the curriculum look promising in terms of providing pupils with more opportunities to learn through practical activities. Throughout the school, there are good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in a range of subjects, such as newspaper reports in history and computer-generated artwork. A good emphasis is given to helping pupils understand how to stay safe and keep healthy. The good range of sport-based extra-curricular opportunities supports pupils in leading a healthier lifestyle. Further enrichment comes through French for pupils in Years 5 and 6, visits to places of interest, and good links with the local school for music, sport and ICT. The school is aware that it could do more to help pupils understand different cultures and increase boys' interest in reading.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral guidance and support, including links with outside agencies, other schools and parents, is extremely strong and has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and their sense of security. The care shown to vulnerable pupils is excellent. Their specific needs are very well catered for, including having a key adult with whom they can discuss any worries. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is monitored closely through detailed individual education plans. Appropriate child protection and health and safety procedures are in place. Academic guidance is satisfactory. All pupils' progress is tracked and where underachievement is identified, appropriate intervention is provided. Pupils are beginning to be involved in self-assessment and to some extent know their individual improvement targets. This system is fairly new, however, so the impact on pupils' learning is not yet fully evident.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has her finger on the pulse of everything that happens in school and therefore knows what is working well and what needs to be improved. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and there is a continual drive to improve standards and the quality of provision. At this level, leadership provides very well focused direction and is based on effective monitoring of data and aspects of provision. Good thought is given to how weaknesses will be tackled, and subsequent action is thorough. The impact of improvement initiatives is monitored but is not always focused sharply enough on the outcomes for pupils. This relative weakness is more noticeable in relation to the outcomes of the activities undertaken by the staff working groups. On a rolling programme, these groups audit provision, update policies and write action plans to address areas in need of improvement. This process is working well, but the school recognises that refinement is still needed. Consequently, at this level of management, direction for improvement is satisfactory. There is good commitment to inclusion. Governors are committed and fulfil their responsibilities well. Many are regularly involved in the school's work. They are well informed and ask pertinent questions to check on the school's effectiveness.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
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	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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were all helpful and polite and we really enjoyed talking to you. I would like to share with you some of the judgements that we made about your school. You will be pleased to note that we agree with your view that your school is a good one. We were impressed with your good behaviour and saw how much this was helping you to do well in your lessons - keep it up. Your achievements by the time you leave school are something to be proud of and show how much effort you have put into your work. Your teachers plan interesting lessons that challenge you, but also make sure that those of you who sometimes find learning difficult get good help. We noticed that while girls and boys generally do as well as each other in most subjects, boys do not achieve as well as they might in reading. We have asked your school to think of some new ways to boost boys' interest in reading so that there is not such a big gap between boys and girls. Those of you in Years 1 and 2 are now getting more opportunities to learn through practical activities, which is good. We saw that you tried hard in lessons but, along with your school, we think that you could do better in reading, writing and mathematics. Your school is working hard to help you achieve more in these subjects and you can play your part by continuing to listen carefully in lessons and doing your very best.

We were amazed at how much you all knew about keeping healthy, and the good work that is done by the school council and Eco committee. You also work hard to help others. You told us that you are keen to find out about different cultures, but at the moment you do not know an awful lot about these. We have therefore asked your school to concentrate more on this aspect of the curriculum. This work will help prepare you better for living in our multicultural society. Finally, we feel that your school is run well. Your headteacher, the governors and all the staff are always working hard to improve things because they want the best for you. We have asked them to make just a few changes to the way that they measure how well their ideas are working. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all well for the future.