

Sandbrook Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 105003 |
| Local Authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 287089 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Mark Madeley |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 170 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Mr Philip Harvey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 February 2003 |
| School address | Stavordale Road Moreton Wirral Merseyside CH46 9PS |
| Telephone number | 0151 6773231 |
| Fax number | 0151 6785478 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school whose pupil numbers have declined since the last inspection. Most pupils live in Moreton in an area of mainly rented accommodation. They are virtually all of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Currently, three pupils attend the local authority's base for pupils with visual impairments, which is situated in the school.

The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the National Healthy Schools Award, The International School Award and the ActiveMark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which gives good value for money. It is an indication of how well management knows the school that the inspection agrees with all the judgements in the school's self-evaluation. Since the last inspection, effective management has fully addressed the issues raised and maintained pupils' good progress in English, mathematics and science. Both parents and pupils are delighted with their school and strong bonds have been built up with the community, outside agencies and health professionals. Because of these links, and the work the school has done to achieve its national health and sporting awards, pupils have an outstanding knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. They are also exceptionally well involved within their school and the wider community.

The headteacher and senior staff check all aspects of provision thoroughly. Their clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development contributes significantly to the school's good capacity to improve further. For example, the progress of all pupils is carefully checked and this information is used well to inform teaching. Governance is satisfactory.

Children's attainments on entry are well below those expected for their age, but good provision in the Foundation Stage gives them a strong start to their education, particularly in language and social skills. Through Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science and test results at the end of Year 6 are broadly average.

Pupils achieve well because lessons are tightly managed and probing questions are used very effectively to encourage pupils to explain their answers clearly. However, in some mathematics lessons the pupils all do the same exercise. This does not extend the learning of the most able sufficiently. Pupils' progress accelerates in the older junior classes where teaching is of a particularly high quality. Tasks here are very well matched to pupils' needs and innovative methods maintain their interest.

Teaching assistants are well trained and particularly effective in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make very good progress. The pupils with visual impairments make very good progress. They are fully integrated into the life of the school. They get very effective support from all staff. Pupils are extremely sensitive to these pupils' needs. High quality links to external agencies help raise these pupils' self-esteem and improve their independence.

All pupils are confident and speak clearly, but their vocabulary is often quite narrow. The school endeavours to extend pupils' experiences and vocabulary through a wide range of visits to places of educational interest and other worthwhile experiences. Additionally, the good curriculum promotes pupils' basic skills well and gives them ample opportunity to exercise through extensive physical education lessons and the outstanding array of sporting clubs. Although they enjoy school a great deal, pupils' attendance is below average and too many arrive late in the morning. This is detrimental to their learning and sometimes disturbs the learning of the rest of the class. All pupils are well cared for. They are supervised at all times and the 'active playtimes' give them plenty to do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all the more able pupils are given tasks in mathematics lessons which meet their needs.
- Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to Nursery many children have very weak language skills, often communicating their needs in single words. They make good progress in all six areas of learning but, despite some very good teaching, their language skills remain weak prior to joining Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. At the end of Year 6, standards are average and have been at this level for five years. This represents continuing good progress by the pupils from their differing starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils generally meet challenging targets for English and mathematics in the end of Year 6 tests. Nevertheless, the more able pupils could do better in mathematics if given more challenging work in some classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress against their targets. They are capably supported by well trained teaching assistants and, despite their difficulties, also do well in the end of Year 6 tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Their good understanding of life in multi-ethnic British society is summed up by comments made by a group of pupils: 'It's your personality that matters not the colour of your skin.' Pupils enjoy their learning and take great pleasure in all aspects of school life. Many pupils share the view: 'There's always something exciting to do and to join in with.' Nevertheless, not all pupils attend school regularly or arrive on time each morning.

Pupils behave well but, occasionally, when work is not precisely matched to their needs, some of them become restless and inattentive. They feel safe and know that staff will handle any problems promptly and sensitively. Pupils talk extremely knowledgeably about the need to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. They are fully involved in school life. The highly effective school council gives them a say in the running of the school and the play leader scheme makes playtimes enjoyable for all. Pupils develop good basic skills. They have an excellent understanding of environmental and global citizenship issues such as recycling, and so are well prepared for their future lives beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good questioning is typical of the effective teaching throughout the school. For example, children in Reception class gained a good understanding of what makes an experiment fair when they let cars roll down a slope because the teacher's questions prompted them to talk about it. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and in classes at the end of the junior years. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to teachers' use of praise and rewards by listening carefully and trying hard at the tasks set for them. Teaching is sometimes innovative, as seen when Year 6 pupils used a physical education lesson to revise the function of the heart and lungs. Pupils who need extra support, especially with their literacy skills, are quickly identified. They make very good progress in small group sessions because teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support them. In most classes, pupils are challenged by the tasks they are given. It is only in lessons where learning is not pitched at the right levels that higher

attainers lose momentum. This practice does not allow the most able to make the progress of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well. Subjects are linked together effectively and this enables pupils to make sense of their learning and to build successfully on their skills and knowledge. Throughout the school, there is a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, reflecting the national award it has received. An extremely wide range of relevant activities that catch the pupils' interest and promote their enjoyment of learning is well targeted at raising achievement and self-worth, for instance, the successful 'rapping project' aimed at developing boys' reading and writing skills. Pupils broaden their understanding of the wider world, through exciting topic work and because the school teaches German to all classes. The emphasis on first-hand experiences through visits and the contribution made by visitors has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development, self-esteem and confidence. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good; it is lively and fun with a significant emphasis on enhancing children's social and language skills. Consequently, this ensures that they continue to enjoy learning in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. Staff place pupils' care as their highest priority. Break and lunchtime supervision is vigilant and procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place, thus ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Parents who responded to the questionnaire speak highly of this aspect of the school's work. High quality provision for children's personal development in the Foundation Stage helps children settle quickly and learn how to work alongside each other. This good provision continues through the school. Topics are extended to aspects such as drug awareness and sex and relationships education as the needs of the pupils change. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and the school is praised highly by the parents of these pupils. Most pupils know how to improve their work further because teachers' marking is good. The system of individual learning targets is relatively new. Older pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to achieve them, but younger ones need more time to fully understand them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed because the headteacher, staff and pupils all follow the school motto: 'helping each other achieve.' This is summed up by comments made by pupils: 'You are made to feel welcome, everyone helps you and everyone is kind and nice.'

Arrangements for self-evaluation are well established and information from these activities provides the school with an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas to develop. This information is used well to establish future priorities. The work of subject leaders has improved since the last inspection. They are now well trained for their roles. They check on standards and help to improve the quality of teaching in their subjects. A good programme of professional development for staff is linked well to priorities for development. For example, teachers'

expertise in information and communication technology (ICT) has been enhanced and, as a result, pupils' ICT skills are improving. The recently revised system to track pupils' progress is providing a clearer picture for staff of where intervention or extra challenge is most needed. Staff are now much more aware of the amount of progress each pupil has made in their class.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and maintains a good overview of the budget, but governors are not sufficiently involved in checking on academic standards and how they could be improved even further.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| 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? | 2 |
| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 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 | 3 |
| 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 Sandbrook Primary School, Moreton, CH46 9PS

Thank you for being so friendly towards us when we visited your school recently. We listened carefully to your views and took them into account when making our judgements about your school. We fully agree with you and your parents that yours is a good school. It helps you make good progress in English, mathematics and science as well as helping you to become good learners and well behaved individuals.

Good teaching is helping you learn well. We thought that the way staff get you to explain your answers to questions was very good. You spoke confidently about how to stay healthy and we thought that your understanding of this was excellent. The school council, play leaders and others who help around the school also do a high quality job for you all.

We think that all children get a strong start in the Foundation Stage where they learn well through lots of 'play' activities. The school cares for you well and it was good that you told us you felt free from aggressive behaviour. You also told us that you really enjoyed the after-school sports clubs and the residential visits; we agree that they are excellent. We had some concerns about your attendance and punctuality. Remember, if you are not in school your teachers can't teach you!

We have asked the headteacher to do two things which will make your school a better place:

- consistently challenge all the more able children in mathematics
- help to make your attendance better and make sure that you come to school on time.

We would like you to help your school improve by doing your best to come to school regularly and on time and by continuing to work hard towards your learning targets. Thank you very much for helping us so well with our inspection. We hope that you are all proud of what you, the staff, governors and your parents have achieved and wish you and the school all the best for the future.