



West Kirby Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105023
Local Authority Wirral
Inspection number 287095
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Michael McIlroy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Anglesey Road
School category	Community		West Kirby, Wirral
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside CH48 5EQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 6255561
Number on roll (school)	285	Fax number	0151 6255561
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Seager
		Headteacher	Mr Neil LeFeuvre
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	19–20 September 2006	287095

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an advantaged community and is above average in size. Few pupils speak English as an additional language and the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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 that is characterised by an inclusive and caring ethos, high standards and a steadfast commitment to further improvement.

The school is strongly rooted in the community which it serves. A very positive climate for learning exists that is founded on good relationships with parents and pupils and good care for all learners. Parents are highly supportive of the school and praise its good level of support for all pupils. As one parent commented of the school and its staff, 'Nothing is too much effort.' This family-friendly atmosphere, where learners are treated as individuals, enables new pupils, including the youngest, to settle quickly into school life.

The school is well led and managed. In addition to creating the conditions for good learning, the recently retired headteacher and her leadership team have firmly focused on achieving high standards and on improving the school. The new headteacher, who has only been in post a short time, has a clear vision of how to improve the school further. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly and robustly checked. Results are carefully analysed, weaknesses identified and prompt action is taken to remedy them. This has enabled the school to exceed its challenging targets. A dedicated staff team and an experienced and skilled governing body support the school's leadership in its work. Subject leaders regularly check the work of pupils.

Standards are high. This is particularly the case in science. Pupils enter the school with levels of ability that are broadly average and make good progress in the well led Foundation Stage. Good teaching ensures that the great majority of pupils continue to achieve well in their learning throughout the school. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well, partly due to the effective deployment of skilled teaching assistants. Most of the more able pupils achieve well, but some are not as fully challenged as they could be.

A good curriculum, with its strong focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, also contributes to the high standards in learning. Pupils receive good support and guidance. Day to day assessment of pupils' work is supportive but not all marking gives pupils enough information on how they can improve their work. Learning is enhanced by pupils' mature and positive attitudes to their work. Attendance is above average and behaviour is generally good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and valued. They speak confidently, and with pride, of their school and the many opportunities it offers them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all higher attaining pupils are given challenging work which stretches them to the best of their ability.
- Improve day to day assessment for pupils so that they can better understand how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the end of the Reception year most have exceeded the early learning goals expected of them. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Standards of attainment have been consistently above average although in 2005 results in reading dipped. Following prompt action by the school, standards in reading rose sharply in 2006.

In Key Stage 2 standards are high. In 2005 every pupil attained the level expected for their age group in mathematics and science. Two thirds attained the higher Level 5 in mathematics and three quarters of pupils achieved this level in science. The progress made by pupils in their learning was good overall and particularly strong in science. However, some of the more able pupils did not do as well as they could have in English. The school reacted swiftly to this and inspection evidence indicates that the standards reached in the 2006 assessments in English have strongly improved and are now in line with standards in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made good progress due to the good support they received from dedicated and skilled teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good and contributes significantly to their academic progress. Pupils display good attitudes towards learning and work and play well together. Their enthusiasm and enjoyment of school are reflected in good attendance and punctuality. Pupils are polite and courteous to one another and to visitors. Behaviour is generally good. The spiritual, moral and social awareness of pupils is well developed. They have a satisfactory awareness of other cultures. The school is working to develop this through fundraising for global projects and visitors from other cultures.

Pupils readily assume positions of responsibility such as play leaders, prefects and school councillors and carry out their roles maturely. For example, councillors have written to parents about several safety issues. Pupils consider their views to be valued by the school and cited how their suggestions for play facilities were incorporated into the new playground's design. Pupils take advantage of excellent opportunities to develop future economic skills. For instance, Year 5 pupils undertake work experience at a nearby children's play group. Others had to apply and be interviewed for the position of play leader.

Pupils demonstrate a very strong understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise. At lunchtime they choose healthy meals and many exercise on the new playground equipment. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to in the event of any bullying. The contribution they make to the local community is strong.

Performances are held for senior citizens and the youngest pupils took part in a sponsored 'toddle' at a zoo for a national charity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Good planning under the guidance of subject leaders ensures that teaching is pitched at a suitable level. A brisk pace in lessons, strong subject knowledge and confident use of information and communication technology (ICT) enable teachers to provide good learning opportunities and an appropriate level of challenge for pupils in most lessons. Regular assessment is used well to plan lessons. Activities are usually well matched to pupils' needs, but on occasion pupils have too little scope to contribute to their own learning and a few of the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Precisely targeted individual education plans and the effective use of additional adults ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress.

Pupils show good attitudes towards learning. They are well motivated and take pride in their work. Good relationships exist between learners and adults. Pupils contribute with enthusiasm to lessons and almost all concentrate well when working individually or in groups. When encouraged to do so, pupils reflect on the progress they have made in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The balanced curriculum has a strong focus on English, mathematics, science and ICT which contributes to the good development of basic skills. This is also true of the Foundation Stage curriculum, where well organised and stimulating activities keep learning exciting for the youngest learners and enable them to achieve well. An appropriate level of homework extends learning. The curriculum is well planned to support the transition to secondary school and is further enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, drama, fencing and judo clubs. All Key Stage 2 pupils learn French. Initiatives, such as the 'successful reading partnership' respond well to pupils' needs. There is a good range of educational visits and visitors to the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good opportunities to make progress in lessons due to high quality individual education plans and good support. More able pupils have additional opportunities to extend their learning through occasional lessons from visiting specialist teachers and the link with the nearby Very Able Child Centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care and support in this positive learning environment.

A dedicated staff ensures that new pupils are inducted carefully and successfully into the school. This commitment is exemplified by two members of staff who learnt sign language in order to enable a new pupil to settle into the Reception class.

The school strongly promotes healthy lifestyles. School meals have been improved and a healthy lunch box scheme introduced. Pupils are encouraged to walk to school. Appropriate guidance is given on growing up and pupils are made aware of the hazards of dangerous substances. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure and regularly reviewed. Pupils are adequately supervised around the school. Older pupils are well prepared for secondary school through suitable lessons, induction days and talking to pupils who have recently left the school.

Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is regularly and carefully analysed and results from tests inform teachers' lesson plans and whole school priorities for improvement. Work is marked positively and supportively. Advice is given to pupils on how to improve their work in some subjects, such as literacy, but not consistently in others. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support in their learning through high quality individual education plans, close consultation with parents and good links with a local special school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at the school are good. The recently retired headteacher, together with the senior management team, have successfully promoted a strongly inclusive and caring ethos and a climate where learning can thrive. A strong sense of team work pervades the school. The new headteacher, who has only been in post for a short time, has a clear vision of how to maintain standards and how the school should develop further.

There is a strong focus on high standards and continual school improvement which is supported by accurate self-evaluation based on rigorous monitoring of lessons, results and pupils' work. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and takes action when necessary. For example, the decline in standards in English in 2005 was quickly analysed and prompt action resulted in a strong improvement in this subject across the school. Consequently, the school exceeded all of its challenging targets in 2006.

The roles of staff are clearly defined. Performance management procedures are closely linked to improving pupils' performance. Even though there were no major issues arising from the last inspection the school remained sharply focused on improvement. Evidence provided by the school shows an improving trend in school performance. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their subjects. They monitor pupils' work closely but not all have the opportunity to observe lessons.

Governance is effective. Skilled and committed governors have a clear understanding of school issues. They support and provide challenge for the headteacher. Finances are well administrated and the school provides good value for money. Parents are highly supportive of the school and value in particular its caring ethos, its community spirit and their good relationships with the staff.

As such, the school with its experienced and capable team, has good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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	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

Thank you for being so kind and helpful when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you. I am writing to let you know what we found.

These are some of the best things which we saw.

- You make good progress in your learning.
- You are well taught by your teachers.
- Your behaviour is generally good.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy.
- Your school council works hard to make things better for you in school.
- Your school is well led and run.
- You are well looked after and cared for by your school.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make some changes in order to make things even better for you. These are:

- to make sure that every one of you is given work that challenges and stretches you
- to change the way some work is marked so that you are able to understand better how you can improve.

Once again, many thanks for all your help and politeness when we visited your school recently.