



# Irby Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105025  
**Local Authority** Wirral  
**Inspection number** 287097  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mark Madeley

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>	Coombe Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Irby, Wirral
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Merseyside CH61 4UR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6482944
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	209	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6482944
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr G Barley
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Vance
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 September 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school of its type. Its pupils, who are almost all of White British heritage, live locally in a mixture of owner-occupied housing and rented accommodation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds the Activemark Gold Award and Investors in People 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 which gives good value for money. Since the previous inspection, good management has maintained the high standards in English, mathematics and science and fully addressed the issues identified for improvement. Managers check all areas of provision thoroughly. Their clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development contribute 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 effectively to inform teaching. However, full account was not taken of all its strengths and the school was over-cautious when it made judgements about its performance. The governing body is supportive and fulfils its role of being a critical friend well.

Children start school with broadly average attainment. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps children grow in confidence and make good progress in reading and number skills. Progress in mark making is satisfactory rather than good because children are not encouraged to have a go at every opportunity. Across the school, progress is good, and pupils achieve well, because consistently good teaching is effective in meeting their needs. In the national tests, Year 6 pupils have for the last five years reached at least above average results, and in 2004 and 2005 well above average results. Standards in lessons are high. Pupils are confident, speak clearly and use a wide vocabulary. They enjoy learning and most are keen to answer teachers' questions, and this helps to extend their skills and knowledge further. They know their individual learning targets in English and mathematics and how they will meet them. Teachers use assessment information well to plan the next stage in pupils' learning, match tasks to their needs and identify those who need additional support or further challenge. The allocation of additional teachers to Years 5 and 6 allows pupils to be taught in small groups for English and mathematics. This arrangement is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning, because it allows staff to focus more closely on the specific needs of individual pupils.

The curriculum for English, particularly reading, mathematics and science is very good. This helps pupils to do well in these key areas. Pupils make good use of their literacy and research skills in topic work but have few chances to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a similar way. Opportunities to enrich and broaden pupils' experiences are outstanding and they are very keen to engage in the wealth of after-school clubs. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Through the school council, they have a say in how the school is run and they know that their views are listened to and often acted upon by management. They are compassionate and work very hard to raise funds for charity. All pupils have an excellent awareness of staying fit and well because the school has an extensive programme to promote their understanding of health issues.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide planned opportunities across all subjects for pupils to develop and consolidate their ICT skills.

- Give children in the Foundation Stage more opportunities to develop their mark making skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the school with a very wide range of abilities. Some are confident and communicate with friends and staff in sentences while others are very shy and communicate totally through gestures. All make good progress across the six areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in their reading skills because they are well supported in school and at home. Early writing skills are not as well developed because pupils are not regularly prompted to try for themselves: for example, children are not consistently encouraged to attempt their own name on paintings. However, by the time they join Year 1 children generally exceed the national expectations for their age.

All pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 because experienced teachers challenge their skills and knowledge. Results of tests and teacher assessments in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently well above average for five years.

In the national tests in Key Stage 2 pupils have consistently reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science for the last five years. They achieve well because teaching is challenging and well planned to meet their needs. The school sets itself challenging targets and in 2006 exceeded them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive extensive additional support and achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils love coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. They are very friendly towards each other and adults and are very keen to learn. One parent wrote that her child was 'happy and contented' and this reflects the views of the vast majority of parents and pupils. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They also show high levels of concern for each other: for instance older pupils are paired with the Reception class children so that they know a friendly face when they start school in September. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture but their understanding of the multicultural nature of Britain today is less developed. The school council is elected democratically and is highly effective in informing management of pupils' views. This has led to beneficial changes, like improved playground markings and updated toilets. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and take their roles, for example as play leaders, very seriously.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are very keen to learn and staff build on this very positive attitude by making lessons interesting. For example, Year 1 children make good use of the school's outdoor area during science lessons. They develop their language skills and extend their understanding because teachers question them particularly well, frequently asking them 'Why?' or 'How did you work that out?' This was very successful in a Year 2 lesson on doubling. Initially numbers were simple. Later they had to double 24, then 48 and then 96 and explain how they reached their answer, which really challenged the most able pupils. In most lessons pupils know what they are expected to learn because this is discussed with them but this good practice is not yet in place in all classes. They get started on tasks quickly because explanations are clear and resources easily available. Pupils are very independent when completing their tasks but help is always at hand for those who need it. At the end of the lesson learning is reviewed and pupils explain their solutions clearly and accurately. Learning in the Foundation Stage is well organised. There is a good mix of whole-class input and play activities, though occasionally whole-class input is too long and taxes the concentration levels of some pupils. Pupils are happy as they learn. Songs are used particularly well to help pupils learn numbers and 'more than' and 'less than'. The reading programme is well organised and successfully involves parents in helping their children to progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs of all the pupils. The strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy helps pupils achieve well in these subjects. The teaching of ICT skills is enhanced by visits to a local centre of expertise, in particular to teach more difficult skills, like data logging and control technology. At present there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills in other subjects. The school places a major emphasis on music, the performing arts and sports. This broadens their personal development and extends their knowledge and skills even further. There is a high take-up for instrument tuition, the school has a flourishing orchestra and school productions are said to be of a very high standard. The range of sports clubs and inter-school sports activities is outstanding and the school's work in this area has been acknowledged by the award of the national Activemark Gold on two occasions.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Parents recognise that this is a very caring school. They are generous in their praise of staff who 'know their children well' and help them become more mature. Pupils

know that they will be kept safe by staff. Parents of children in Reception class were very happy with induction arrangements, as indicated by this parent's views: 'Starting school has been an easy and pleasant experience for our child and ourselves thanks to the support of the school.'

Systems to safeguard pupils are in place. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and have sufficient information to help them at home. Pupils are aware of their targets and how they can achieve them. Their work is consistently well marked so that they know what they have done well and how they might improve in the future.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and governing body lead the school very well. They have created a highly experienced team of staff who all share the school's mission statement. They want all pupils to reach their potential in both academic skills and personal development and together they work effectively to achieve that aim. All staff demonstrate through their target setting, planning and teaching that they have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Management makes good use of the systems for checking the school's work. It bases its forward planning closely on an evaluation of the school's performance. Forward planning is well thought out. For instance, changes in age group for some staff were linked closely to additional training. Subject action plans are satisfactory. They improve pupils' learning but the success criteria are not always measurable so the school does not know the impact of some initiatives. Resources are carefully allocated. For example, the governing body has thoroughly considered the impact on finances of additional staffing in Years 5 and 6 and knows how it will be sustained in the near future. Governance is good. The governing body fully supports the headteacher and the school and maintains a good overview of spending and forward planning.

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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>	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

<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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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

<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.

## 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**

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school and were delighted with the welcome we received from you. We listened carefully to your views and used them when coming to our decisions. You are right to be proud of your school because it is good. It helps you make good progress in your learning. You know that the staff work hard for you both in the classroom and by providing additional activities, like interesting visits and after-school music and sports clubs. We agree with you that their work is good. You and your parents said that your headteacher is a really special person and very good at her job. We think that she provides the school with very good leadership.

You behave exceptionally well around the school and are polite and well mannered. Older children look after the younger ones really well. Those of you with responsibilities, like school councillors and play leaders, do your jobs very well. When talking to us you did so with great confidence and clarity. You demonstrated that you understood how to stay fit and well. We agree with you that the huge variety of clubs and activities the school offers is excellent.

We have asked the headteacher and her staff to do two things which we think will make your school even better:

- plan ways that you can use and develop your computer skills in other subjects
- give the Reception children more opportunities to practise their mark making.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard in lessons. We would like to thank you all for being so helpful to us and wish you and your school all the very best for the future.