

# Great Meols Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105033
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	287099
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Ravey

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr N Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs P Shedden (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Elwyn Road Meols Wirral Merseyside CH47 7AP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6324606
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6324606

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Its local area is socially advantaged although the school also draws its pupils from a wider area that has a broader range of circumstances. The vast majority of pupils are White British. None are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has an Activemark Award for sports provision, a Health Promoting Schools Award and Investors in People Award. The headteacher is working temporarily with the local authority although she has a small amount of time allocated to return regularly to school. The deputy headteacher is acting headteacher for the school year. There has been extended staff absence in Key Stage 2 this year.

## 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 with some outstanding features. At the heart of its success lies outstanding provision and outcomes for pupils' personal development and well-being, allied to a strong and well focused commitment to academic improvement. An outstanding curriculum ensures that the full range of pupils' learning and developmental needs are met very well and all this is underpinned by outstanding care, guidance and support. However, the school's overall effectiveness is judged to be good rather than outstanding because, despite these many strengths, standards in English and science are not yet as high as those in mathematics.

Pupils achieve well overall because teachers build effectively upon a firm foundation of excellent relationships to ensure that pupils are very largely successful in meeting challenging academic targets. Good quality teaching helps pupils to make good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. This enables them to reach well above average standards overall by the end of Year 6. Due to the school's very effective improvement programme, standards in mathematics are exceptionally high, however, those in English and science are not as high. Standards in English were high in recent years but in 2006 they fell albeit to above average levels. This was due to a fall in standards attained in writing. Standards in science are above average. The school recognises the need to improve standards in writing as well as the quality of pupils' investigational skills in science. It has put in place a programme to secure these improvements and early signs indicate that it is having the desired impact. The school's commitment to a broadly based education is seen in the way pupils do well in other subjects, for example in music.

The very successful development of pupils' social skills is evident in their extremely positive attitudes to school in general and to learning in lessons. The pleasant, industrious atmosphere found in lessons is a hallmark of the school's success in this regard. Teachers expect the most from pupils but still encourage them with praise. However, not all marking of work provides pupils with the advice they need to improve further. Very thorough checking of pupils' progress means that additional support can be given quickly and effectively, as it is needed. The school takes very good care of its pupils and is particularly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils.

Good leadership and management ensure that the school provides a good quality of education. In some respects leadership is outstanding, for example in ensuring excellent progress in mathematics and in the development of pupils' social skills. The headteacher and acting headteacher provide strong and very purposeful leadership. The staff team works very well as a unit while the governing body provides good support and challenge for senior managers. The school has an accurate view of its performance and good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and science to match the high levels being reached in mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently provides pupils with the advice they need to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start school in the Reception class with broadly average standards. They make good progress to reach above average standards by the time they start Year 1 because the stimulating

Foundation Stage curriculum and good teaching promote good learning. By the time pupils finish Year 6, standards are well above average overall although they vary between subjects. In mathematics, pupils make outstanding progress to reach exceptionally high standards. This is due in part to teachers' successful implementation of the school's recent strategy to raise standards in mathematics and is helped by a strong focus on involving parents in supporting their children's work in the subject. Standards in English have also been high in recent years but fell in 2006 to above average levels. The school identified the need to make improvements in the quality of pupils' writing and its efforts to do this are beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress. The school also recognises that standards in science could be higher, especially in relation to the skills of practical investigation. It is also beginning to address this issue successfully. Progress is good overall, including for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who benefit from early identification of their needs, good support in lessons and good assessment procedures. The school is largely successful in meeting very challenging targets in English and mathematics, indicating that pupils achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to learning and school life are outstanding. They benefit from excellent relationships with staff and each other. As a result, they work and play very well together. They are really 'switched on' to learning - this is noticeable immediately one enters lessons. Pupils are very well adjusted socially and work together with ease in response to the very good opportunities provided for them to do. The high quality of social skills is a particular strength of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding. Exciting, high quality playground facilities add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Comments from pupils such as 'I'm excited about coming out to play!' and 'We really, really like using the equipment!' give a flavour of their feelings about this. Attendance is above average. Behaviour is good overall and in some lessons it is outstanding. Pupils are polite and pleasant, courteous and cooperative. They have a very good understanding of how and why to live healthy lives, reflecting the school's Activemark and Health Promoting School Awards. They are clear about the need to keep safe. Pupils welcome the chance to take responsibility and are very responsive to appeals to support charitable events. They talk enthusiastically about their church choir service at Christmas, about visiting senior citizens and about how they contribute to environmental care through the Future World Project. Pupils' very good skills of numeracy and literacy and their outstanding social skills mean that they are very well prepared for future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers help pupils to be lively, inquisitive learners. They work well with the whole class and with small groups of learners, encouraging and challenging pupils to think clearly. They take great care to include all pupils in lessons, valuing the contribution each makes. Support staff work closely and effectively to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Teachers are successfully implementing the school's strategies for raising standards still further in mathematics. This is evident in the clear and consistent way they help pupils to understand the skills of calculation. Teaching of writing and science is not yet as successful as that in mathematics but the improving quality of pupils' work shows that teachers

are well on their way to achieving similar success, providing work that challenges different groups of learners to achieve well. An effective focus on developing the skills of scientific investigation is very evident in the pupils' work. Teachers mark work conscientiously but the best practice of providing comments that will help pupils improve their work is not consistently used throughout the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum meets pupils' needs very well. This is shown in their great enjoyment of school and in how well they achieve. The school successfully places strong emphasis on developing basic skills but also pays full attention to the wider curriculum, with pupils having good chances to shine in areas such as sport and music. For example, over 70 pupils are learning to play musical instruments. Very good outdoor facilities such as a pond and facilities for growing vegetables promote environmental awareness. Provision in the Foundation Stage, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who have particular gifts and talents is good, allowing these groups of pupils to do well. The school's outstanding provision for developing social skills is abundantly evident in pupils' maturity of approach to school life. The many clubs and activities available outside lessons are much appreciated by pupils and, along with a good range of educational visits and visitors to the school, make a strong contribution to pupils' academic, social and cultural development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It has rigorous procedures in place to safeguard them and ensure their health and safety. Very committed staff work extremely hard and successfully to promote pupils' self-esteem. The high quality accommodation and grounds provide further evidence of the school's commitment to supporting its pupils, who respond very positively to this stimulating environment. Care and support for vulnerable pupils is outstanding. The school has developed a very clear and thorough system to keep a close check on pupils' progress, allowing teachers to provide additional support quickly and effectively as it is needed. It works well with other partners, for example through the wide range of specialist agencies that support pupils' health and well-being. As a result of the care, guidance and support provided, pupils flourish both socially and academically.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good with outstanding features. They are particularly successful in promoting the development of pupils' personal and social skills and are also very successful in promoting high standards in mathematics. The same high level of success has not yet been achieved in English and science but robust strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing and to develop their skills of scientific investigation are having a positive impact on achievement in these subjects. The headteacher and acting headteacher form a strong and effective partnership which manages to find the right balance between high expectation and support of staff. As a result, staff work very effectively as a team. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The governing body is well organised and well informed. It brings a high degree of expertise to the school, to support it and hold its managers to account. The large majority

of parents who responded to the questionnaire provided for them were entirely supportive of the school. However, a minority expressed concerns about communications and behaviour, largely focused on specific issues. Generally, the school communicates well with parents and its response to staffing difficulties has ensured stability of provision for pupils. Inspectors found behaviour in the school to be good. The school's success in securing improvements shows that it has good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

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## Annex A

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

### 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>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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.

## Annex A

**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	1
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so helpful when Mrs Sadler, Mr Bond and I visited your school recently. It really was a pleasure to talk with you and to join you in your lessons.

Your school gives you a good quality of education - and some of the things we saw were outstanding! The first of these is the excellent attitude you have towards school. You told us how much you enjoy it and that shows in the way you work. You are growing into confident, mature young people. You reach very high standards in mathematics and make at least good progress throughout the school.

Your school provides you with some wonderful learning activities - and fantastic playground equipment! You told us how much you appreciate that and we can well understand why. The adults who work in your school take very good care of you and are working hard to help you to do well. We think they are doing a good job but we think there are a couple of things that will help you do even better. You do well in all your subjects but best in mathematics, so we've asked your headteacher and teachers to help you do as well in writing and science. Also, we have asked your teachers to make sure that when they mark your work, wherever possible they give you advice on what you can do to improve it.

We are very confident your school will continue to get better and better. You can help by continuing to do your best. We have no doubt you'll do just that!