

Penketh Community Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	111239
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	288900
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Delia Hiscock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Langford
Headteacher	Mr Mark Hilton
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Coniston Avenue Penketh Warrington Cheshire WA5 2QY
Telephone number	01925 723719
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Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Factual inaccuracy not detected by the school during the draft stage.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an urban community. A below average proportion of pupils have free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but is proportionately greater in some year groups. A tiny number of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The school is smaller than average and this has made the staffing changes in recent years all the more marked. The school has gained the sports ActiveMark 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 that boasts some outstanding features in its work. It meets the needs of its pupils well and is an enjoyable place to be in the eyes of the pupils. Consequently, they achieve well. Parents place much confidence in the staff and its leadership and greatly value the efforts the school makes to involve them in their children's learning. This comment sums up those of many parents: 'It is a most caring, welcoming and happy place. A great environment for learning!'

Much of the reason for this view is that the quality of pastoral care is exceptionally good and fosters the well-being of each child really well. The contributing features that bring this about are very sensitive support and encouragement, and approaches that allow pupils to do lots of things for themselves. This develops their skills and personal qualities very well.

Pupils are very much involved in the improvements the school makes and they know that what they have to say is important. The reports they present to governors have prompted some helpful checks on safety. Their views on what they feel is important keeps the school informed about their preferences. These features contribute hugely to pupils' outstanding personal development and are the reason why they become responsible, caring individuals whose behaviour is exemplary and who listen really well to their teachers and classmates.

In the Foundation Stage, provision is exceptionally good and features startlingly good conversation so children attain above expected standards at the end of the Reception from average attainment on entry. Standards are just as high at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 though standards in writing are lower than those in reading. Work is now underway to tackle this and staff are forging ahead through strong teamwork and new insights into how best to inspire young writers. However, there are not enough opportunities for some of the more able pupils in particular to develop their narrative skills as well as they should, so progress in this aspect of their work is variable. That said, the wide breadth and depth of skills in reading, mathematics, science, ICT, art and instrumental music develop pupils' talents and prepare them well for the future world of work.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there is an increasing proportion of outstandingly good teaching throughout the school. This is a result of some very good teamwork, excellent recruitment, and monitoring and coaching by the headteacher and some key leaders. Most pupils can explain what they need to do to improve their work and often what they need to learn next. The curriculum meets their needs and interests well, and features some impressive enrichment experiences and supportive links with the high school. Activities designed to develop pupils' social and moral understanding are a particular strength. The pupils' awareness and adoption of healthy lifestyles is a prime example of how the school guides them into taking the lead and the responsibility themselves. This approach pervades the school's work and is the reason why they gain the qualities they need for life so well. Very good links with external agencies are used to provide specialist guidance or access to further support. The very intelligent and energetic leadership of the headteacher, backed by some perceptive team leaders and expertise from the governing body, has instilled robust systems to the school which enable staff to lead the school forward. This is how the school has accelerated the momentum of developments following some staffing changes in Key Stage 2. Evaluation is exceptionally sharp, and though modest in parts, pinpoints exactly what has been achieved, is aware of the

need to improve standards in writing, and involves everyone. The school provides good value for money and demonstrates good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop narrative writing skills of the more able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average. This is because pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those of each distinct heritage make good progress and achieve well. The exceptionally good progress the children make in Reception from average stages of development on entry is the reason why they attain above average standards on entry to Year 1. This exciting start is the result of the impressive provision which helps children to think and talk so very well. At the end of Key Stage 1, the above average standards are successfully maintained because outstanding teaching in Year 2 matches pupils' needs precisely. The first steps the pupils make into Key Stage 2, in Year 3, quicken progress again because dynamic teaching consolidates what they know, moves them on very well, and nurtures some remarkably sensitive writing given their age. In writing, the vast majority of pupils attain the standards expected for their age. However, standards in writing for the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 could be better. There is more to do, but these pupils have made good progress over two or three years and are now beginning to meet challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils' very positive attitudes demonstrate why the level of their attendance is so high. Many of them are eager to talk about their school and the impact the school council has had on improving facilities such as the newly painted toilets, for which the colour design triggered much debate and negotiation. Their excellent understanding of healthy food, lifestyles and fitness is the result of the genuine way in which the school guides and nurtures their growing awareness and adoption of what they feel is good for them. One pupil commented: 'Crisps are not banned. It's OK if you want, but we measure how many of us eat healthy snacks so we know.'

Equally, pupils have a good appreciation of their own and other cultures. This is particularly evident in their insightful work with the local Muslim and Hindu communities. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development features superb social and moral development which allows the pupils to blossom as individuals. It is why they work very well in their 'thinking teams' and with partners throughout the school. These approaches support and develop their very good relationships, so their behaviour is exemplary. The respect that they show towards each other is a mark of their tolerance, and extends to include those in need. This is why they contribute to local charities and willingly take on responsibility around the school. The skills the pupils gain for the future equip them well for the world of work, but it is the breadth of skills and personal qualities that help them to mature so well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There are some outstanding features, including searching questioning by teachers, explanation and discussion and begins with the very youngest children in Reception. In lessons showing these features, all pupils are challenged and motivated and make excellent progress. Though satisfactory in Year 1, teaching in many lessons makes pupils think and helps them to develop good skills to learn for themselves. Most of the teaching matches pupils' needs in learning closely, and pupils know what they are to learn. Despite the advances needed in writing, teachers and teaching assistants work well together to help pupils to move on quickly, particularly the higher ability pupils in mathematics and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The very good relationships and thoughtful approaches help most pupils to understand exactly what they will learn and for the most part how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enriched really well by carefully chosen visits, visitors, and use of high school links and external services which all help to make the learning purposeful and enjoyable. For example, guitar tuition for all year 4 pupils is extended to help pupils to reach higher levels of achievement. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities which are very much enjoyed and supported by pupils. These foster talents and broaden interests, and build on the good range of other activities which meet the needs of the pupils well, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are limited opportunities for the more able pupils in particular to develop their narrative form of writing. Above all, the pupils' personal and social skills are very well promoted and the promotion of staying safe and healthy is perceptively planned. Provision in the Foundation Stage starts this work impressively and links between subjects throughout the year groups help to make learning meaningful.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is exceptionally good because the personal needs of pupils are supported so well. The requirements for care, safety and child protection are in place, including those for risk assessment. This has involved pupils and enables them to develop very well as individuals in a climate of trust which fosters self-esteem and confidence. They know that they are safe and very well cared for. Excellent support for additional needs is the result of detailed checks on the progress and helps these pupils to work equally well as their classmates. The assessment systems are used very well to track progress and trigger additional support, and close checks ensure that the pace of progress is maintained or accelerated. Academic guidance, while good, is not as strong. Although not used consistently to help pupils to improve their writing, it features clear goals for pupils to attain and often tells them how to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The dynamic leadership and management of the headteacher is well supported by an insightful leadership team and strong governing body which together place pupils' personal development and the skills for life and learning at the heart of the school's work. Leaders enable the school to sustain good standards, improve performance and develop effective learners who are very well prepared to make choices in their lives and have good skills to build from. To bring this about the headteacher has implemented robust systems that ensure extensive monitoring, sharp analysis, frequent and often objective checks on attainment, and lots of staff training and development. This links very well with some intelligent deployment of curriculum leaders which values their excellent teaching skills and penetrating insight. This deployment of some outstanding models of teaching and learning is used skilfully through several year groups to help the pupils to deepen their ideas and push on in their thinking. This minimises any weaknesses that slow pupils' progress. This work has resulted in exceptionally good evaluation, so the school knows how to forge ahead, for example in invigorating features of pupils' writing. Leaders have identified the need to improve the narrative writing skills of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 but have yet to see the impact.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<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

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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

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

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

Inspection of Penketh Community Primary School, Warrington, WA5 2QY

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so helpful in the discussions we had. We found that your school is good and that there are some things that are first-class. We think that the school listens to what you have to say and what you prefer and then improves things for you. What a great way to make things better!

Your school takes really good care of you all. Everyone works hard to help you to do well in your studies and is particularly helpful in making sure that you learn to keep healthy and safe, and grow up to become so sensible and helpful to others.

You told us that the school is helping you to learn a lot as well and we agree. We found that many of you know how to improve your work and are learning how to find things out for yourselves. This is a super way for you to learn for yourself. It is a skill that will help you when you go to the high school and when you start in the world of work in the future. To help you to learn even better, we have asked the school to:

- provide more opportunities for some of you in Key Stage 2, especially those of you who can write well now, to improve your story-writing skills.

We think that you have done a super 'make-over' on the toilets. Well done! Keep up the energetic, busy playground activity. What a good way to keep fit!