

Heygarth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130324
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	293625
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Totty
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Zsapka
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Heygarth Road Eastham Wirral Merseyside CH62 8AG
Telephone number	0151 3271570
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is situated in a suburban residential area. Pupils come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The headteacher joined the school in January 2007, while the other three members of the senior leadership team took up their posts in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has undergone a turbulent period since it was last inspected, and had to surmount severe budgetary problems and uncertainty about its future. Most seriously, it has lacked continuity in leadership with five headteachers in the last three years and other staff changes. Frequent reallocations of groupings have unsettled pupils, affected behaviour and contributed to some underachievement in Years 5 and 6. Effective actions taken by the new headteacher have got the school back on track. Parents report with approval 'that the school is now heading in the right direction' and this accords with the views of inspectors.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children's skills are typical for their age on entry to Nursery. They get off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. Here they are provided with a good range of well organised experiences, but some opportunities are missed to direct their learning more closely and to reinforce it through thorough assessment. Pupils reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress thereafter to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Progress is better in Key Stage 1, where the teaching is consistently good and the new initiatives to improve writing have proved successful. Much of the recent focus in upper Key Stage 2 has been to modify pupils' behaviour to ensure that effective learning can take place. While the former has largely been achieved, this has not fed through to improved standards at the higher level 5, and weaknesses remain, especially in writing. Most pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in their enthusiasm for play and sporting activities. They have a good knowledge of how to stay safe, but do not always act with due regard for the safety of themselves or others, for example when engaged in some aimless horseplay. The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' all-round development. Specific programmes, such as Multiskills training, hockey and football and a growing range of other sporting activities have been well received by pupils. However, the curriculum is in transition, and there are insufficient opportunities to promote greater independence and creativity. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not yet fully effective in supporting pupils' learning. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped. While some of the teaching is good, the overall quality is not consistent enough to ensure that pupils make good, rather than satisfactory, progress. Work is not always adapted to the needs of all, and pupils are not engaged fully enough in assessing and improving their work. Pupils are satisfactorily cared for by the staff. Weaknesses in academic guidance have been identified and some are being resolved, but new systems are at too early a stage to have impacted favourably on pupils' achievement.

The school has taken satisfactory steps to improve since its last inspection. Managers recognise that there is much to do to ensure improvement to standards and achievement. Monitoring arrangements are not yet fully effective at all levels. Partnerships with other organisations and the use of resources are satisfactory. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in Key Stage 2, with a focus on raising the achievement of the more able pupils, especially in writing.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- Make better use of assessment to help pupils improve their work.

- Ensure that monitoring, evaluation and review systems are fully effective in all aspects of the work of the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The level of children's skills and knowledge on entry to Nursery is typical for their age. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, but do better in both physical development, where their progress is more closely assessed, and social development. By the time they join Year 1, most pupils achieve the expected early learning goals, albeit with some variation within the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Effective action has been taken this year to improve the writing standards of the younger pupils. This rate of progress is not fully sustained in Key Stage 2. Progress for the older pupils has been hampered by staffing discontinuity, reorganisation of classes and some unsatisfactory behaviour. These barriers to learning have been substantially reduced this year and this has enabled Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to make up much of the ground lost. Targets have been met for Year 6 pupils at Level 4, but not at the higher Level 5. Writing remains a weakness. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were average overall, but lower in mathematics. Provisional results for 2007 show an improvement in mathematics as a result of a greater focus on problem-solving skills. The impact of the school's participation in the support programme run by the local authority to help the school raise standards is most evident in the improved standards of behaviour of the older pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school, especially the increasing range of sporting activities both at lunchtime and after school. Pupils are aware of the importance of exercise and respond positively to the school's healthy snacks scheme. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory, enabling pupils to concentrate better on their learning, but some thoughtless behaviour persists in less supervised situations, which indicates that pupils are yet to reflect on and take full responsibility for their actions. Opportunities to develop greater independence in lessons are missed, as pupils' involvement in assessing their learning is limited. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsible roles in school by acting as play leaders or school councillors. The new school council has carried out a useful audit of pupils' views about school as a basis for future action. Some older pupils run the tuck shop, but otherwise the opportunities to develop enterprise skills are limited. Pupils acquire a satisfactory command of the basic skills they need for later life. Attendance has improved this year and is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where teaching is consistently good, as, for example, in Key Stage 1, lessons are matched well to pupils' abilities and specific needs. Teachers use resources imaginatively to capture pupils' attention and involve them actively in learning. Teaching assistants play a full part in supporting the class teacher or in offering effective specialised support to individual pupils. Good relationships prompt pupils to try hard. Where teaching is otherwise satisfactory, relationships are positive, but planning is often less clear, the pace of learning is slower, and undeveloped questioning does not provide sufficient challenge to stretch the more able pupils. The use of resources and teaching assistants is more limited and occasionally pupils lose focus. Although teachers are now more aware of pupils' prior attainment and lesson planning sometimes identifies different groups of pupils, work is not adapted consistently to meet the needs of all. Insufficient use is made of assessment to ensure that learning moves on briskly. The quality of marking is inconsistent, reflecting the variation in the quality of the teaching. Overall, it does not enable pupils to improve the quality of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory in enabling children to make steady progress in their learning in spite of some restrictions in the quality of the outdoor area. The curriculum for older pupils is being redeveloped. Its strength lies in its increasingly effective contribution to pupils' personal development through the expanding range of physical activities. Increasing use is being made of ICT to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning, but this is not yet fully established across the curriculum. The 'Big Write' initiative is improving pupils' skills in Key Stage 1. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall and the school is now poised to use the better data it now has to direct support programmes more effectively. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped. Pupils benefit from a satisfactory programme of visits and visitors. The range of after-school activities is satisfactory overall, as the number of arts-based activities is small.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. Hard work and a consistent approach to implementing the school's new behaviour policy have significantly reduced the number of serious incidents, although a small element of low-level disruption still persists. Pupils feel safe and say they can go to an adult who will deal appropriately with their concerns. There are good links with outside agencies to ensure that pupils with emotional difficulties get the support they need. Procedures for health and safety, including risk assessments, are secure. Procedures for child protection and arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff meet current requirements. The school is now regaining the confidence of parents, by involving them more closely in its work and in preparing for its imminent role as an extended school. Transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils are good, enabling them to feel confident about moving to secondary school. Satisfactory procedures for tracking the progress of pupils have been

introduced, but these have not yet consistently impacted on lesson planning. Assessment systems do not support pupils' achievement adequately.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. An entirely new senior leadership team has taken shape in stages since September 2006, but much of the recent impetus for change has followed the new headteacher's take-up of her duties in January 2007. A realistic evaluation of the quality of provision has helped to identify key priorities accurately, and a good interim development plan has set a clear course for future school improvement. New systems are enabling the team to gain a sharper view of strengths and weaknesses. Useful audits have been taken of the views of pupils and parents, and of the skills of staff. These have yet to be reviewed and evaluated fully, and several actions await implementation. There are some early signs of positive impact, for example, in improving behaviour and pupils' attitudes, but impact in other areas, most notably teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, is less evident. Monitoring by subject leaders, particularly in areas other than numeracy and literacy, is not established. This is reflected in inconsistencies in assessment procedures and within the curriculum. Governors are supportive of the new direction the school is taking, are aware of the work that needs to be done and offer satisfactory challenge as 'critical friends'.

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

<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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

We visited your school to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for making us welcome and being helpful when we talked to you. One of my colleagues was lucky to have the opportunity to speak to some of you at greater length and was impressed by how clearly you put across your views.

We judge that you are receiving a satisfactory education. We agree with you that your school provides good opportunities for you to understand how to be healthy. We were impressed by the range of opportunities you had in games and sport to develop your interests and talents. You are keen to take part in these, but sometimes you need to be more careful not to knock into the other pupils in the playground. Staff have made a big effort to try to ensure that the older pupils can learn better without being distracted by some poor behaviour. Most of you are now following the teachers' lead well in respecting each other and allowing others to get on with their work. Since the new headteacher has arrived, things have started to look up.

There are some actions that we have asked the headteacher and staff to take to make your learning better. First we have asked them to make sure all the pupils in Key Stage 2, especially those who learn faster, get the sort of work to stretch them to make better progress. Second, we want them to ensure that teaching and learning is consistently good for all pupils. Third, we want the teachers to use assessment better to make you more independent and help you contribute to your learning more. You know that the headteacher and her senior staff have started to make changes in school. We have asked them to check carefully how well these changes are going to ensure that they do, indeed, help you to make good progress in your academic and personal development.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. You can help by always doing your best and by working hard with your teachers to make Heygarth Primary an even better place to be.