

Well Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105050
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	295340
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Blaylock
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Davies
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
School address	Well Lane Tranmere Birkenhead Merseyside CH42 5PF
Telephone number	0151 6459844
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is average in size and serves an area which experiences social and economic disadvantage that is three times the national average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and a few have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is more than four times the average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In March 2006, the school was judged to require a notice to improve and asked to improve children's standards and achievements, the curriculum and attendance. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school has tackled successfully the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection report. The curriculum has been developed and is now satisfactory. A new approach to more relevant topic work has captured the interest and enthusiasm of pupils and is beginning to meet their needs. A range of successful measures has been taken by the school with the help of its school council to improve attendance. This is now satisfactory. Standards of learning have also improved. The trend of declining scores in national tests at Key Stage 1 has been reversed. In the statutory assessments for pupils in Key Stage 2 in 2006, standards rose modestly in science but impressively in mathematics and English. Nonetheless, standards overall remain well below average. The school recognises this and is determined to raise the achievements of pupils.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and are polite and courteous to others and visitors. The headteacher's focus on improving behaviour has paid dividends. The behaviour of pupils is now good. The school cares well for its pupils. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and consequently make good progress in their learning. However, the academic guidance which pupils receive is underdeveloped and not all the more able pupils are as challenged as they could be.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides sound leadership for the school. Despite some discontinuity in staffing, he has succeeded in moving the school forward. As well as addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report, he has developed a positive climate for learning at the school, which is enabling the long legacy of low standards to be tackled. The effective leadership of the Foundation Stage is reflected in the good provision which pupils enjoy in this key stage and the good progress which they make. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) provides very good leadership for her area of responsibility. Subject management, however, is underdeveloped. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and some teaching is outstanding. Since the last inspection, weaknesses in teaching have been tackled and satisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised. There is scope to provide more opportunities for staff to learn from the good practice of others.

Links with parents have also been developed. Parents who returned questionnaires are very supportive of the school's work. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are better informed about the school's work than previously. In the light of the improvements in behaviour, attendance and other areas identified in the last inspection report, the school is now providing satisfactory value for money. It is well placed to further raise the standards and achievement of pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in all subjects.
- Share good practice in teaching and raise the proportion of consistently good teaching.

- Strengthen management by developing the role of subject managers.
- Improve the academic guidance which pupils receive.

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

Pupils enter the school with levels of ability and skill that are well below average. Their language and personal skills are particularly weak. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress in the Foundation Stage, especially in their personal and social development. However, due to their low starting point, a large majority of pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards that are below what is expected nationally for their age group.

In the Key Stage 1 national assessments in 2006, the standards achieved by pupils were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The most recent assessments carried out by the school show that this trend has been reversed and that standards, whilst remaining below average, are rising, particularly in writing. Current pupils are making satisfactory progress. In the 2006 national tests for Key Stage 2, standards rose in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Substantial gains were made in mathematics and English. Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils in Key Stage 2 are making good progress. Nonetheless, standards overall remain well below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning, as do the small group of vulnerable pupils. This is due to the good guidance and support which they receive. The more able pupils make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are proud of their school. They are enthusiastic and most work hard. They enjoy school. Pupils understand how to keep healthy. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Consequently, pupils feel safe and report that there is very little bullying. They know who to turn to if they need help or have worries. Pupils have good opportunities to exercise responsibility as play leaders, lunchtime monitors and as school councillors. The school council has been instrumental in bringing about changes in school life. For example, it successfully asked for extra games equipment for use at playtimes. Attendance has risen and is now satisfactory. The school, and particularly its home-school link officer, has worked hard to raise attendance through a variety of effective strategies, including working closely with the school council. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community. Although pupils have opportunities to be involved in mini-enterprises, such as the 'holiday show topic' project, the school's low standards of literacy and numeracy do not yet enable pupils adequately to develop the skills that will promote their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some of it is outstanding. Relationships between learners and adults are good. As a result, pupils behave well, thoroughly enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes to their work. They work well together when asked to do so. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The subject knowledge of teachers is good and, where teaching is most effective, it is well used to set challenging targets and to pose questions which make children think hard. For example, in an outstanding lesson in the Foundation Stage, pupils' learning was reinforced through constant questioning about their letter sounds. Good teaching is also characterised by a varied range of learning activities, conscientious planning and good use of questioning. Where teaching is adequate, lessons lack rigour, time is not always well used and planning is less detailed. The pace of learning is also slower and opportunities for pupils to consider and to reflect on their own development of language skills are missed. Some work does not stretch the more able pupils enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Improvements made to the curriculum mean that it is now satisfactory. There is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy and additional sessions for reading have been introduced. A new scheme has been introduced to teach history, science, geography, art, music and technology in greater depth. Topics such as 'chocolate' and 'the holiday show' have captured the interest of pupils. The increased relevance of these new topics to pupils' lives is helping to improve learners' communication and problem-solving skills which can then be applied in other subjects. In some classes, this new approach has offered good opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as football, netball and musical tuition. Some pupils have opportunities to learn French. There are a number of educational visits, such as a recent farm trip, which are linked to the new topics. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential activity. Some additional support has been provided for pupils in Year 6 who have fallen behind in their learning. However, few opportunities exist for the more able pupils to be challenged.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils. Arrangements for health and safety, including child protection procedures, work well. The school provides good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, vulnerable pupils and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are effective induction arrangements for new pupils and satisfactory links with secondary schools. Good links exist with outside agencies, including with a local authority unit which offers advice on improving behaviour. The home-school link officer is effectively deployed, for example, in making sure that more pupils come to school on time and understand the importance of this. Parents and carers are welcomed into the school and are strongly encouraged to become involved in their children's education. Homework is set regularly, but there is scope to increase the amount which is given to older pupils. The academic progress of pupils is satisfactorily tracked and used by the school to identify underachievement. This

information is increasingly being used by teachers to inform their planning. Pupils are aware of targets for academic improvement, although not all know the level they are aiming at. Marking is satisfactory, but not enough of it informs pupils of the next steps they must take in order to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has provided sound leadership for the school. Progress has been made in the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, most notably in raising attendance and developing the curriculum. He has ensured the school has continued to improve, despite some discontinuity in staffing. Changes made to the school's environment and pupils' behaviour have helped to develop a good climate for learning. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate and the headteacher has a satisfactory view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan is adequate and is evaluated regularly. There is scope for it to contain more detail about how attainment in the core subjects and in key stages can be raised.

The school has drawn heavily on a nationally funded programme designed to raise standards. As a result, useful assessment and tracking procedures have been introduced. This data has been used well recently to identify 'target groups' of pupils who are underachieving. Performance management procedures are in place, but do not yet fully exploit new assessment data. Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled satisfactorily and some initiatives have been taken to spread existing good practice within the school. Pupils' work and teachers' planning are checked and feedback is given to staff. Teaching is monitored regularly in collaboration with officers from the local authority. Although standards in Key Stage 2 rose last year, not all of the school's targets were met.

The SENCO provides very good leadership for her area. The Foundation Stage is well led and provision is good for this key stage. Subject management is satisfactory. Managers of the core subjects have a sound overview of their areas, but their role in promoting improvement in their subjects is underdeveloped. The school has recognised this and is drawing on the resources of the local authority to provide training for some managers. Governance is satisfactory. As well as being supportive of the headteacher, governors are providing more challenge to the school leadership. Governors are better informed about the school's work. Several have visited the school to observe lessons and to meet with subject managers. Finances are carefully administered. Parents are kept informed of the school's work through regular parents' meetings and newsletters. Links with parents have been strengthened through a number of family learning courses which the school hosts. Parents who returned questionnaires are very supportive of the school's work. Given the improvements made in the curriculum, attendance and in raising standards, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	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	2
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	4
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	2

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Many thanks for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school to inspect it recently. I am writing to tell you what we found. These are some of the best things we saw:

- your behaviour is good
- you are polite and courteous to each other and to visitors
- your attendance has improved
- you have a good school council
- you enjoy school and the new topics you are studying
- you are well cared for by your teachers and other adults.

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

- to make sure that all of you learn as much as you can in English, mathematics and science
- to make all teaching as good as the best which we saw
- to provide more training for teachers to help them do the jobs they do outside the classroom
- to make sure all of you get more help to get better at your work.

Once again, many thanks for all your help when we inspected your school.