

Netherton Moss Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104856
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	298529
Inspection dates	17–18 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	191
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Winstanley
Headteacher	Mrs S Scott
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
School address	Swifts Lane Netherton Bootle Merseyside L30 3RU
Telephone number	0151 5255026
Fax number	0151 5259263

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size primary school serves an area of social and economic deprivation. Almost all children on roll are of White British heritage and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just above the national average.

The school holds the Surestart Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools award and the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

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 provides a satisfactory and rapidly improving quality of education. Several aspects of its work are good. These include pupils' personal development and the quality of care, guidance and support provided. Standards are rising and achievement is improving because good leadership and management are tackling underachievement. Initiatives such as teaching English, mathematics and science in ability groups enable teachers to provide appropriate challenge in lessons. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are now rigorous so that pupils understand better what is expected of them and how to improve their learning. The quality of teaching and learning is now monitored rigorously and the outcomes are used to share good practice and set targets for improvement. Because of this, teaching has improved and is bringing about higher standards, as evidenced in the latest national test results.

Children start their schooling in Nursery with skills that are below those expected of children of their age. Achievement is satisfactory because of the suitable provision and the stimulating range of practical activities in the Foundation Stage. Progress is satisfactory so that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement overall. The Year 6 results show much improvement in science and mathematics: however standards in English have also improved but not as significantly. This is because standards in writing are proving resistant to improvement.

This is a happy school. Parents value the education and care it provides. Pupils say how much they enjoy school. They behave respectfully to each other and adults and they listen attentively in lessons. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils appreciate the importance of healthy eating and exercise. They are very proud that their school has achieved the Healthy Schools award. The school council gives pupils a chance to have a say in improving the school. It organises fundraising events and has improved playground facilities. By the time they leave school most pupils have developed into confident young people with a satisfactory grasp of basic skills to enable them to take advantage of the next steps in their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and is improving. This improvement is having a positive impact on raising standards, mainly because it is challenging pupils of all abilities. Teaching is encouraging pupils to learn more effectively by posing questions which really make them think, but pupils' learning is only satisfactory because their poor speaking skills are acting as a barrier to taking full advantage of the more challenging questioning they are receiving. One perceptive pupil's comment is: 'Our lessons have got a lot harder. That's good, but sometimes I struggle with answers to more difficult questions. I know what I want to say but somehow I can't find the right words.' Teaching assistants support teachers very well, especially by supporting pupils of lower ability. This enables these pupils to make similar progress to others. The satisfactory curriculum meets pupils' needs. It is complemented by a good range of enrichment activities which add significantly to pupils' enjoyment and adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Governors are supportive and increasingly knowledgeable. They are starting to seek information and to challenge school managers in order to raise standards and achievement. Effective leadership and management have enabled the school to make good progress since the last

inspection, especially in improving standards and achievement, and are indicative of the school's good capacity to improve further. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Improve pupils' speaking skills.
- Make sure the governing body offers sufficient challenge to managers.

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' achievement overall is satisfactory and improving. Most children enter Nursery with skills below those normally expected for their age. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is particularly low. In the Reception class most children make satisfactory progress because of the stimulating range of activities the school provides. By the end of the Reception year most reach the levels expected, although their skills in communication, language and literacy do lag behind. The latest test results in Key Stage 1 indicate that standards have improved and are closer to national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement. This improvement in pupils' progress is a direct result of more effective teaching in Years 1 and 2. The downward trend in standards at the end of Year 6 in 2005 and 2006 has also been reversed: achievement is satisfactory. The school met its challenging 2007 targets. The latest national test results are much improved in science and mathematics and are closer to national expectations. Standards in English have also improved, but not as significantly, because of weaker speaking and writing skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same rate of progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy being at school. Attendance rates are rising and are now average. Pupils say they enjoy taking part in the rich variety of clubs and activities outside of school which add to their enjoyment and adoption of healthy lifestyles. The school has worked hard to improve the behaviour of a small minority of pupils and the impact of this is seen in the pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe in school and trust adults to deal with problems sensitively and quickly. They are active fundraisers for a variety of charities. Older pupils help younger ones by acting as playground partners and buddies. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show a good grasp of right and wrong and show sensitivity to other religions and cultures. Pupils' progress in literacy and mathematics is improving, but more work is needed on developing their speaking skills, as well as their writing, to prepare them better for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The level of demand and challenge provided in lessons is much improved. Pupils are coming to terms with this but a legacy of underachievement in the school and weak speaking skills mean that their rate of learning is lagging behind the good teaching seen. Teachers are using the improved procedures for assessment and tracking in their lesson planning to tailor tasks to the needs of groups and individuals. Lessons are varied, and effective use is made of computers to add variety to tasks and to engage pupils' interest. Good relationships mean that pupils feel secure, and this adds to their enjoyment of learning. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils of lower ability. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their comments indicate how well pupils have done and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are some good features, such as the stimulating range of activities in the Foundation Stage. The new arrangement for teaching in ability groups has improved provision for English, mathematics and science. Learners' needs are more appropriately met and this means that pupils are making satisfactory progress. A new suite of computers has brought provision up to date and pupils are encouraged to become competent and confident in their use. The amount of time given to teaching has increased and exceeds the national recommendation. The curriculum is well enriched through a very good range of visits and visitors as well as school clubs and activities. The experiences in dance and French, for example, stimulate enjoyment and nurture children's talents and interests effectively. Provision for personal, social and health education is making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. It has improved since the last inspection because the procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress are now highly effective in supporting the academic development of pupils of all abilities. Staff work well with parents and external agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Child protection and health and safety procedures are firmly established. The pupils are well prepared in Nursery for starting school and for making a smooth transfer into secondary school because of good partnerships with parents and other schools. Parents agree that pupils are looked after well. A typical parental comment is 'My child enjoys coming to school and I am pleased that the school takes such good care of her.' There are effective systems for monitoring and rewarding children's attendance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. They have improved since the last inspection because leaders and managers are effective in tackling underachievement with flair and determination.

Teaching and learning are now monitored regularly and rigorously. The outcomes are used incisively to share good practice and identify where improvements can be made. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and middle managers, is inspiring good teamwork across the school in the pursuit of improvement. Procedures for self-evaluation have been sharpened to include the views of parents and pupils. The school has a generally accurate view of its own effectiveness and what it needs to do to raise standards and achievement further. This is reflected in the good quality of the school's forward planning. Governance is improving. Governors are supportive and they are seeking information about how well the school is doing, but more remains to be done to ensure that they hold the school to account.

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	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	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

Inspection of Netherton Moss Primary School, Bootle, L30 3RU.

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you. What you told us helped us reach our judgements about your school.

We think that your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education and that it is improving very quickly because everyone is working very hard to make sure you make better progress in the important subjects of English, mathematics and science. Results have improved significantly because your teachers have been making lessons harder and are expecting more from you. Your writing is not as good as it should be, however, so we are asking your school to be sure to concentrate on helping you to improve your writing. We are also asking staff to help you speak more confidently and clearly so that you can answer the more difficult questions teachers are now asking you.

We were impressed with how well you behave and how well you get along with each other. We were struck by how respectful you are of adults and each other. All the adults working with you take good care of you so that you feel safe and enjoy coming to school.

Your headteacher and all her staff are working extremely hard to make sure that standards at your school go from strength to strength. We are asking school governors to keep a closer eye on progress. We are confident that you will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure it keeps on improving.