

Kirkby CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104448
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	308603
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev T Stratford
Headteacher	Ms M Hindmarsh
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Hall Lane Kirkby Liverpool Merseyside L32 1TZ
Telephone number	0151 477 8510
Fax number	0151 549 2732

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2; the provision for the more able pupils and to help pupils understand how to improve their work; the quality and impact of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: national published data; the school's own documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with senior leaders, parents, governors and pupils; the parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Many pupils who attend this larger than average school live in an area of high social and economic disadvantage. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of educational need is above average. The school shares the site with a children's centre that provides extended care for pupils both before and after school. The school has an Artsmark Silver Award and is accredited a Healthy School.

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 of its provision outstanding. Central to its success are the very effective leadership of the headteacher, good teaching and an extremely positive and inclusive ethos.

Pupils thrive as a result of the outstanding care and support they receive. They feel safe and secure, and treat each other with respect and kindness. They learn from the positive role models of the staff to be good humoured, open and friendly. Because they are so happy, pupils knuckle down to work with enthusiasm and, for the most part, take pride in their work. Some, although responding positively to advice about how to improve their work, do not always present it as carefully as they might.

Good teaching, together with an effective curriculum, ensures that pupils achieve well overall. They get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes, making good progress from their weak starting points. Progress through Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) is consistently good and pupils attain broadly average standards in the Year 2 national assessments. Over the last two years, progress has slowed in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6), mainly because pupils' punctuation and spelling, and their recall of number facts and methods of calculating, have not developed as well as other aspects of English and mathematics. However, from a starting point of well below expected skills on entry to school, to attaining average standards on exit from Year 6, pupils' progress is good overall.

Pupils enjoy lessons, many reporting that 'they are fun' and that they 'get lots of help if they are stuck'. They particularly enjoy using a range of different technologies. For example, in successive lessons, pupils in Year 2 recorded their Christmas poems and then used laptop computers to practise their skills in subtraction. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher used video creatively to improve pupils' Spanish vocabulary. The introduction of small special classes, to help pupils who find learning or concentrating more difficult, have been long standing in Key Stage 1 and have more recently been introduced in Key Stage 2. The school's detailed tracking system reveals that, partly as a result, those pupils with learning or emotional difficulties or who have medical conditions make good progress. This is because they are successfully helped to overcome any barriers to their learning. These pupils are equally well supported to achieve well because of the close partnerships the school has forged with key outside agencies who work helpfully with pupils, parents and teachers. The recent opening of a children's centre on the school's site means that pupils now have access to extended provision from early in the morning to the evening.

The quality of assessment is good overall, enabling teachers to set work that matches pupils' needs well. However, not all teachers' marking is as effective as others' in letting pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve. This is an inconsistency in the school's provision. A rich diet of visits, visitors and after-school clubs enhances pupils' experiences and enjoyment very well. Pupils' achievements in art are very good and vibrant displays of their work around the school are testament to their award of the Artsmark. The programme for personal, social and health education is very influential in ensuring that pupils become concerned and environmentally aware young citizens. A minor weakness is that pupils' curriculum for dance and for design and technology is somewhat restricted.

Managers at all levels contribute well to pupils' excellent personal development and to their outstanding care. The provision for the above average proportion of pupils with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of education need is very well led and managed. The two influential deputy headteachers make telling contributions in the areas of performance management, coordinating teachers' training, forging closer links with the community and managing the school's effective assessment and tracking systems. The headteacher, her senior management team and governors are spot on in their evaluation of the school's performance and provision. On the other hand, plans for improvement lack specific enough detail about how actions to be implemented are expected to enhance pupils' achievements, standards and learning. Despite this, given its good record of improvement since the last inspection and its effective leadership, the school clearly has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. This is both because they and their parents are well briefed before the children enter and as a result of the outstanding care they receive. Very effective management means that adults work well as a team to plan and organise a range of engaging activities. These take place in stimulating classrooms that are well designed to promote all areas of children's learning. On entry to the Nursery, children's skills are well below those expected overall. Many children's ability to communicate and to cope for themselves is weak. The staff in the Nursery rightly give these aspects special focus in the children's first term, enabling them to become more confident and ready to learn. The children make good progress throughout this key stage in all areas of their learning but still enter Year 1 with a lower proportion than average reaching the learning goals set for them.

Teaching is consistently good, and some is outstanding. In the Reception class, children were entranced by teachers' use of a hand puppet to teach them the sounds linked to letters and the letters' names. This is just one example of the creative use of resources to stimulate children's learning. Children's progress in all areas of their learning is recorded diligently, which enables adults to set children tasks that predominantly meet their needs. There are occasions when adults working with Nursery children miss opportunities to promote their speaking skills fully by asking them open-ended questions. The exemplary way in which children's social and emotional development is nurtured lays an excellent foundation for their outstanding personal skills as they move through the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils spell and punctuate more accurately, have better recall of number facts and methods of calculation and that all of them take pride in presenting their work well.
- Ensure that all teachers mark pupils' work in such a way that helps them clearly understand what they have done well and what they need to improve.
- Make school improvement plans more specific about how proposed actions and the allocation of resources will impact on raising achievement and standards and improve the quality of pupils' learning.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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 Kirkby Church of England Primary School, Liverpool, L32 1TZ

I had a lovely time when I inspected your good school recently. It was a joy to see you behave so well and I was very impressed by the excellent spirit in which you tackle your work and relate to each other. Many of your parents tell me how pleased they are that you go to such a friendly school that helps you to make good progress.

Your headteacher and her staff work very successfully to give you a well rounded education and to help you to become confident and concerned young citizens. You obviously enjoy your lessons because your teachers help you learn a lot in a fun way. It was a pleasure to hear so much laughter in classrooms. Many of you also told me that you particularly liked art and design, and the lovely displays show very clearly how you have helped the school to earn its Artsmark. The adults who run the school know very well where it is strongest and where it needs to improve to make it even better. I have asked them to do three particular things to help with this improvement. You will probably be able to work out how you can help with them.

They are:

- to make sure that all of you, but in Years 3 to 6 especially, improve your spelling and punctuation, and better remember your number facts and methods to work out mathematics problems
- to make sure that all your teachers mark your work in such a way that you know what you have done well and what exactly it is you need to do to make your work even better
- to make sure that the plans that the school writes to guide its work look more closely at how you can improve your learning.

I have also asked your teachers to be a bit stricter with some of you about how you present your written work - you can certainly help with this by taking more care with your work and listening to your teachers when they ask you to be neater in your books.

I hope you carry on enjoying school and try really hard to do well.