

Wavertree Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104616
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308633
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2008
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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	195
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Janet Eastwood
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Brooksbank
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Rose Villas Wavertree Liverpool Merseyside L15 8HJ
Telephone number	0151 7331231
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated to the east of Liverpool. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The acting headteacher is due to take up her permanent post in the school in September 2008. In the last year the school has gained the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark award.

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. After an unsettled period, effective action taken recently, principally by the acting headteacher, is putting the school back on track. The school's hard work to ensure higher standards in pupils' health has been recognised in its recent awards.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 6 standards have typically been below average. In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily in English and mathematics but they do not do well enough in science. This is because the subject has not benefited from the same quality of development as the others. Moreover, teachers have been less secure in assessing pupils' levels of attainment in science and as a result some weaknesses were not identified quickly enough. School leaders have, however, undertaken a full revision of the science curriculum with planned implementation of the changes in September 2008. Standards currently in Year 6 are improving in English and mathematics but lag behind in science.

The curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' all-round development. Its strengths lie primarily in its contribution to pupils' good behaviour, health and sense of security in school. Pupils are cared for and their personal development and well-being overall are satisfactory. Opportunities for reinforcing basic skills, for example developing pupils' speech and writing and their competence in information and communication technology (ICT) are missed and this limits achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. While some of the teaching is good, the overall quality is not consistent enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well but weaknesses in the use of assessment, including marking and the use of personal targets, hold back pupils' progress. Revised systems for recording pupils' progress have recently been implemented to help teachers identify which pupils need extra support. Similarly, systems for academic guidance and support are too new. At this very early stage, their impact is limited.

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since its previous inspection. The acting headteacher has put in place several of the building blocks needed to bring about sustained improvement. Moreover, there is now a strong sense of teamwork and participation in school development throughout the school. School leaders have an accurate awareness of priorities but the new systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school are not yet as effective as they could be. This is reflected in the school's over-optimistic evaluation of some aspects of its performance. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve and offers satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage provides a satisfactory quality of education. Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those typical for their age, particularly in their ability to communicate. They make good progress in some aspects of their learning but skills in literacy and numeracy remain well below those expected at the end of Reception. Children's attitudes to learning are positive. They learn to mix and relate well to other children and to adults but some opportunities to encourage children to learn and find out for themselves are missed. Satisfactory teaching builds on these good relationships and lesson planning effectively considers the needs of all children. However, the opportunities to enhance speaking and listening skills

are limited. Some weaknesses in the quality of resources restrict the range of experiences open to children. Staff look after children well, ensuring that children are happy and settled in school. Staff have worked hard with increasing success to forge strong links with parents to help them support their children's learning. Assessment information in the Foundation Stage is not yet fully secure but systems that have been recently implemented are enabling the staff to track children's progress reliably in the Nursery. The Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement, especially in science.
- Make better use of assessment, including marking and targets, to improve teaching and learning.
- Ensure that basic skills in speaking, writing and ICT are fully developed throughout the school.
- Ensure that monitoring systems are fully effective in raising standards and achievement.

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

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils build satisfactorily on their earlier learning as they progress through the school. Standards by the end of Year 6 have generally been below average but in 2007 they were exceptionally low. Pupils in Year 6 did not do well enough in 2007, particularly in science, principally due to a legacy of weaker teaching and pupils' poor attendance. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are currently achieving satisfactorily. Standards currently in Years 5 and 6 are above average in English and mathematics but this represents satisfactory progress for these pupils from their starting points in Year 2. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Standards in Year 6 remain below average in science due to weaknesses in pupils' investigative and data-recording skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. A strength is their moral development, which the school promotes well. This is shown in pupils' good behaviour, their understanding of the importance of staying safe and in acting sensibly, for example on the steep staircases. Some opportunities are missed, however, to develop social skills and some unevenness in curriculum coverage holds back pupils' cultural development. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and most enjoy their education, and especially enjoy sporting activities. Attendance is satisfactory overall but there is significant variation between year groups, which impacts on pupils' achievement. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community and take on responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils do a useful job as escorts to the youngest children. Pupils' average levels of basic skills set them up satisfactorily for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships are invariably good and teachers manage pupils well. When teaching is good, pupils are clearly aware what they are learning and answer teachers' probing questions well. On these occasions, teaching assistants are used very effectively to support groups and individual pupils. Sometimes, however, teachers talk too much at the beginning of lessons. This reduces the opportunities for teachers to assess pupils' understanding, and for pupils to become more independent by making more active contributions. Consequently, for some pupils, attention wanders and the pace of learning slows. The new assessment systems now provide teachers with helpful information about pupils' progress, but there has not been time for this information to be used fully. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not make full use of marking to set individual targets that enable pupils to move their learning on briskly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in supporting pupils' academic and personal development. Good use has been made of sports coaching and visitors to enhance pupils' standards of health and understanding of safety-related matters. The good range of extra-curricular sporting activities is complemented by some foreign language lessons and residential visits for all year groups. The effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they progress at the same rate as the other pupils. Strong links between subjects, however, do not yet feature prominently in the planning of the curriculum. The impact of this is seen in the lower standards of speaking and writing in comparison to those of reading. The use of ICT across the curriculum to support learning is an acknowledged area for development. Links with external consultants have been established to help teachers develop pupils' basic skills. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this on raising the standards of pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Systems to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Child protection and other arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet statutory requirements. Effective use is made of outside agencies, for example the learning support unit, to boost the self-esteem of identified pupils. Pupils feel confident that they can approach any of the staff if they are troubled and say that the learning mentor sorts out any minor disputes they have with other pupils. The school has other useful strategies in place to encourage good behaviour and there are satisfactory procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality. Systems for providing academic support and guidance are in their infancy. While leaders have a more accurate understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, especially in Key Stage 2, they have not yet used that information to ensure good achievement for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has worked with determination and enthusiasm to implement a number of measures to improve school self-evaluation. However, there has not been time for them to take effect fully. The governors have shared in and supported these improvements satisfactorily. A good sense of teamwork exists throughout the school. Lesson observations, conducted by the acting headteacher, are detailed and accurate and this has enabled other senior leaders to obtain a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning. These senior leaders are developing leadership skills well. However, much of the monitoring that has taken place has yet to be fully evaluated. The evaluation skills of some senior leaders and subject leaders are underdeveloped, which is reflected in the inconsistencies in pupils' achievement. Moreover, the school makes satisfactory use of targets to raise standards but there is variation in the impact of their use across subjects.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school recently and to tell you about our findings. We judge that yours is a satisfactory school overall. Some things are good; what impressed us most was your keenness and knowledge of how to stay healthy, and your understanding of how to stay safe. That is shown in your good behaviour and in your friendliness and politeness to visitors. We also liked the way the Year 6 pupils took good care of the youngest children.

We judge that all of you, including the youngest children, make satisfactory progress, which helps you reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. At the moment you are doing better in English and mathematics than in science. We have asked the acting headteacher and teachers to do the following things:

- Make sure that you do well in all subjects and improve your standards, especially in science.
- Develop your skills of speaking, writing and using ICT.
- Make better use of marking and targets to help you learn.
- Make sure that the new systems for checking the work of the school operate well so you are able to achieve well and have more reasons for enjoying your education at Wavertree.

You can all help by attending well, trying hard in science, writing and ICT lessons and getting more involved in answering questions.