

Linacre Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104853
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308685
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Marie Carney
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Haney
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Thornton Road Bootle Merseyside L20 5ED
Telephone number	0151 9221466
Fax number	0151 9330209

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2008
Inspection number	308685

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a residential area near the centre of Bootle. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, and very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the average of most primary schools. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at various stages of the year during Key Stage 2 is above average. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Award and is part of an Education Action Zone.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for pupils. An outstanding feature is the quality of the curriculum. Pupils achieve well from skill levels on entry to the Foundation Stage that are well below national expectations. In most years, standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with the national average. This is the case in the current Year 6, although standards vary from year to year because of differences in the nature of various year groups. For instance, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fluctuates, as does the proportion of pupils who join the school late in Key Stage 2. The school caters well for these variations, helping all pupils, including those with additional needs, to make good progress. However, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been well below average in recent years, with pupils making only satisfactory progress. The school has taken steps to address this, for example, by improving the quality of teaching. Pupils' achievement in the current Year 2 is improving but standards are still below average overall. This is a key area for continued improvement so that pupils have a better foundation in literacy and numeracy when they move into Key Stage 2.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and the great majority behave well. The very few who display challenging behaviour are managed well by the staff. Pupils develop a good awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. Levels of attendance have improved since the last inspection. Although the level is still below the national average overall, the attendance and punctuality of the great majority of pupils are good. The school takes all necessary steps against parents of the small minority whose attendance is poor and has achieved good improvement with some. The care, guidance and support that the school provides are good. Some aspects of care are outstanding, for example, how well the school works with other agencies to benefit the more vulnerable pupils.

Teaching and learning are good. Strengths of the teaching include the effective focus on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills, which underpin their overall progress, and the supportive relationships between staff and pupils. Teaching assistants make a good and often very good contribution to the progress of individual pupils. These strengths are praised by parents, evident in comments such as, 'The teachers take great pride in the children and their work.' and 'I have found all the help I needed to help my son to like school.' A few parents expressed concern about the consistency of teaching when teachers are absent, but the school takes all the necessary steps to minimise disruption on these occasions. The curriculum has several major strengths and is particularly well designed to expand the pupils' horizons and give them a wealth of experiences through visits, themed days, visitors, after-school clubs and residential opportunities.

Leadership, management and governance are good. There is clear direction by the headteacher and a strong senior leadership team, who are well supported by an effective governing body. Senior leaders have a good awareness of how the school is performing through extensive monitoring of provision, lessons and pupils' work. As a result, the school's forward planning is precise and well focused on raising pupils' achievement. The school has continued to develop since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve. It gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage Unit, created last September to address a falling roll situation, caters well for the needs of all the children. It boasts a much improved layout and new toilet facilities for the children, making an efficient use of resources. Teaching and learning are good, and children make good progress in all areas of learning. The great majority are on course to reach levels of attainment just below typical expectations in most areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. In personal, social and emotional development, their skills are at least in line with expectations, and often better. Provision is very well managed and organised by an experienced practitioner who is ably supported by two high quality assistants. Relationships between staff and children are excellent and help to promote the children's feelings of security and well-being very effectively. The curriculum is well planned to cater for the wide age range and the younger, nursery-aged children benefit from working alongside older children. There are good opportunities for children to experience a wide range of activities, including imaginative play, both indoors and outside. Plans to build a covered area outside this summer are intended to help the staff provide continuous provision outdoors throughout the day. Regular assessments of the children are made which mean that staff have a good understanding of the different needs of the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average overall, but show a greater variation year-on-year than is found in many schools because of differences in the nature of the year groups. For example, standards in the current Year 5 are well below average because of a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and of those who have joined the school since Year 3 with additional needs. To cater better for their diverse needs, the year group has been divided into two with additional support from teaching assistants. This is successfully helping the pupils to make progress. Currently, they are doing best in writing and this is because of an effective, school-wide focus on teaching these skills. In Year 4, on the other hand, standards are above expected levels because there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whereas in Year 6, standards are average. Overall, pupils make good progress. In Year 2, there is a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but, because of good teaching by a senior member of the leadership team, the pupils are making good progress. The school-wide priorities to improve pupils' writing and calculating skills are beginning to help improve the achievement of pupils and raise standards, especially in Key Stage 1, where they have been too low in the past. The very few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language do well and reach levels of attainment that are similar to and at times better than their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and have good relationships with one another and with staff. Behaviour is good, and there are

effective procedures to manage the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils so that it does not impede the progress of others in lessons.

Punctuality to school is generally good and pupils are encouraged to arrive early and take part in the breakfast club, or to come on time through the motivation of class rewards. Pupils have a good awareness of how to look out for one another, be safe themselves and live a fit and healthy lifestyle, indicated by the good take-up of places on activities after school. There are good opportunities to take on responsibilities in school, for example, as school councillors, monitors and buddies. The school council has had its recommendations acted upon and pupils are very pleased with the improved playground layout and resources in recent years. Their contribution to the wider local community is good. Pupils learn how to work independently and as a team. They develop sound basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to take forward to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Some teaching in Key Stage 2 is outstanding. Teachers know the pupils very well, relationships are good and the pupils' creativity is developed well. Lessons are well planned and include a good range of relevant tasks that stimulate pupils' interest. For example, role-play activities in Year 2 encouraged independent research on tourism. Pupils in Year 4 responded enthusiastically to an inspiring way of teaching description in speech and writing, enabling the pupils to produce imaginative story endings and to display excellent descriptive language skills. In Year 6, pupils were able to devise their own methods of problem solving and discuss and challenge each other maturely, showing independence in their learning. Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties are assisted well by skilled teaching assistants. Assessment of pupils' work is strong and pupils are accustomed to assessing how well they are doing themselves. Regular marking tells pupils clearly of what they have achieved and how they can improve. In the better lessons, pupils are set work at suitably challenging levels. However, in a few lessons, work is not matched well enough to pupils' ability and there is little difference between the levels of work given to different pupils. This means that some pupils find the work too easy or too difficult and, as a result, do not achieve as well as they could.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

There is good emphasis on literacy and numeracy, which equips pupils with the basic skills they need in all lessons. Improvements in ICT resources and teachers' confidence in using them are helping pupils to learn. The school is very responsive to the many different learning needs of the pupils, providing specialist support where necessary. The impact of the focus this year, on developing pupils' writing and calculation skills, is becoming evident in improvement in standards. The school makes good use of social and emotional teaching materials to promote pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education successfully and there is also a strong emphasis on the importance of healthy lifestyles. The provision for out of hours learning is outstanding. The many clubs, including cookery, sign language and a variety of sporting activities, are well supported. There is an impressive number of graduates from the Children's University in recognition of attendance and commitment to out of hours learning. Parents have also commented positively on the impact of the Year 6 'master classes'. A wide variety of enrichment

activities enhance the curriculum, such as visiting artists, writers, theatre groups, police officers and teachers of dance, drama, music, modern foreign languages and physical education. Special events such as industry days and construction days increase the children's knowledge and skills of business and engineering. Their economic and financial capability is enhanced by participating in the 'Design an Outfit' challenge and helping to run the school bank and tuck-shop. A range of educational and residential visits plays an important part in extending the curriculum beyond school in various subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are some outstanding features in the level of care provided and the way in which the school works with a wide range of outside agencies. The staff show a high level of commitment to pupils' well-being and achievements. This is particularly true for vulnerable pupils and those with learning or behavioural difficulties. Structured activities at break and lunch-times also support those pupils who would otherwise find these times difficult. Good transition arrangements ensure movement to the next year group is smooth and Year 6 pupils are well supported in their transfer to secondary school. All aspects of child protection, safe recruitment of staff, risk assessment and health and safety meet requirements. Good systems for assessment and tracking pupils' progress are now in place across all year groups and help the school to set targets and inform staff of pupils' future needs. The recording of precise levels of attainment is starting to embed across the whole school. A wide range of intervention strategies enables personalised support for individuals, which are adjusted as necessary following regular reviews of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team has a good overview of provision across the two key stages and the Foundation Stage. A recent addition to the team has been a senior teacher with responsibility for personalisation and intervention. Working alongside the special educational needs coordinator, this teacher monitors carefully how well the many additional programmes for pupils' learning cater for the needs of individual pupils. Those who join the school after the Foundation Stage settle in quickly because they are also a focus for attention. This is good practice in response to the particular context of the school and its pupils. The senior team and governors monitor and evaluate the performance of the school well and their views match the judgements in this report in all aspects except the curriculum, which the school judged to be good. The commitment of all staff to do the best for all pupils is good and the school provides effectively for those with additional needs. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' achievement and attendance, is mostly successful in reaching them, and at times exceeds them. There is a good range of expertise among governors who support and challenge the work of the senior leadership team well.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now I would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

Yours is a good school.

- The staff take good care of you all and teach you well.
- You enjoy school and your behaviour is good.
- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science from Year 3 to Year 6.
- The staff arrange an outstanding range of activities for you to enjoy in lessons, after-school clubs and on residential trips.
- Your headteacher leads the school well.

There is something the staff need to do to make the school better and you can help.

- The staff have introduced some very good ways to help you learn to read, write and solve problems in mathematics. They need to build on these and help those of you who are in Years 1 and 2 to make better progress.

So work hard in all your subjects and carry on enjoying school!