

Northway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104879
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308693
Inspection date	10 January 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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Devina Halsall
Headteacher	Mrs Ros Gill
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Dodds Lane Maghull Liverpool Merseyside L31 9AA
Telephone number	0151 5262565
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; pupils' personal development and well-being; the care, guidance and support the school provides; the achievement of pupils and provision in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, data about past performance, discussions with the chair and vice-chair of governors, senior and other members of staff as well as pupils, and a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This above average sized primary school serves a residential area north of Liverpool. The proportion of pupils who come from beyond the immediate area of school is increasing and is more than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school accommodates pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and consequently the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is twice the national average. Overall, however, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school is average. Almost all pupils are of White British origin with a small proportion from minority ethnic heritage. None is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school has gained the Investors in People Award, National Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Activemark and Artsmark.

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 its pupils and has a number of outstanding features. These are: the way the school provides for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; pupils' personal development and well-being; the care, guidance and support for pupils; and the leadership of the headteacher.

Pupils achieve well. From levels of attainment that are broadly in line with expected levels on entry to the Nursery, they reach standards in Year 6 that are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is achieved through good quality teaching, rigorous assessment of how well pupils are doing and marking of their work so that the pupils learn how to improve.

Standards in Year 6 have fluctuated in recent years and are adversely affected by variations in the proportion of pupils with additional needs and by the inward mobility of pupils from other schools, often beyond the immediate locality. Parents are frequently attracted to the school because of its very good reputation helping pupils with additional needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make outstanding progress thanks to the high quality support they receive from staff in the resourced learning base as well as those who help pupils in mainstream classes. All groups of pupils make at least the progress expected of them in Key Stage 2. However, last year, the proportion of the more able pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in English was lower than the school expected. The school is aware of the need to address this and is taking steps, for example by introducing improvements to the teaching of writing, to help all pupils to do better. It is this relative weakness in achievement by the more able that prevents achievement from being better than good at the moment. Nevertheless, pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. Progress is very good in Key Stage 1 classes and at the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently well above average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school very much, behave well and develop an excellent awareness of how to be safe and lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. They speak enthusiastically about lessons and report that teachers make the lessons fun. Pupils help to make the school an enjoyable and safe place to be, for example through their roles as school councilors, play leaders and peer mediators. They develop well the essential skills of cooperative behaviour and independence in learning, which help them when they begin secondary education. Attendance, which has improved since the last inspection, and punctuality are good.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good with outstanding features. Relationships among staff and pupils are very good so that pupils listen well and readily join in discussions. There are examples of outstanding lessons, which have features such as teachers' excellent subject knowledge and high expectations and use of a wide range of teaching strategies and styles. For instance, in one English lesson the teacher, dressed as a detective, helped to enthuse pupils in their work of deduction. New technology, such as interactive whiteboards, is used exceptionally well and stimulates pupils' skills of independence and research. Teaching assistants make a big contribution to all aspects of pupils' learning, especially in helping those with additional needs.

The curriculum is being enhanced through creating links between subjects and emphasising creativity. Personal, social and health education makes a very good contribution to pupils' emotional development, understanding of personal relationships and how to lead a healthy

and fit lifestyle. French is taught from Year 2 onward. In addition, there is an extensive range of popular clubs and activities after school and a valuable residential experience for pupils.

There are several key features of the high quality care, guidance and support provided for pupils. Partnerships with other schools, parents and external agencies are outstanding and have significant benefit for pupils. The school has responded very well to a key issue in the last inspection report to improve assessment, and has developed excellent systems to keep track of pupils' achievement. Staff quickly identify any signs of underachievement and then intervene with group work and one-to-one support or change their class teaching, for example to improve pupils' writing. All staff know the pupils exceptionally well and pupils report that staff often recognise when things are not going well and help even before being approached.

Parents say their children enjoy school very much, behave well, and that staff are warm and welcoming. The return rate of the questionnaires sent to parents by the inspection team was excellent and the great majority wrote highly complimentary comments about the work of the school. Many endorse the view of one who wrote, 'I can only praise the school and all who work in it, from head to caretaker.'

Leadership, management and governance are good. There is outstanding leadership by the headteacher, a senior leadership team that has good leadership and management skills, and an efficient governing body which is being led well by the recently appointed chairperson. School self-evaluation involves governors and staff well and leads to the key priorities in the current school improvement plan. The school's views match many of the judgements of this inspection, though it has underestimated its view of the pupils' personal development and well-being, and care, guidance and support. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress and it has good capacity to improve. It provides good value for money overall and excellent value for money in assisting pupils with additional needs to do well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for and staff expectations for their progress are high. Children become confident and engage well with their learning, taking responsibility for what they do from an early age, choosing activities and enjoying helping. They make good progress so that by the end of the Reception year standards are above national expectations. Staff plan the activities together and all areas of learning are covered very well in classrooms. However, to make best use of the outdoor learning environment, part of it requires to be covered. Currently, it is used for all of the areas of learning but a covering would allow it to be more widely used. The Foundation Stage is well managed and organised. When staff spot any trend of decline in children's aptitudes they are quick to address the need by adapting how and what they teach. The transition into the Nursery, between classes and on to Year 1 is well planned and ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of more able pupils in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics so that more of them reach the higher levels.
- Improve outdoor provision for the children in the Foundation Stage.

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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?	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	2
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	1

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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	1
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	1
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 Northway Primary School, Liverpool, L31 9AA

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 and has a number of outstanding features.

- The staff take excellent care of you all and teach you well.
- You enjoy school very much and have excellent attitudes to school work.
- You make good progress in school subjects.
- The staff arrange a wide range of activities for you to enjoy in lessons, after-school clubs and on the residential trip.
- Staff make an outstanding job of helping those of you who find school work difficult.
- Your headteacher is an outstanding leader for the school.

To make the school even better, there are two things to do and you can help.

- The staff have introduced some very good ways to help you to learn, for example by setting targets for you to achieve. They need to build on these and help you, especially the more able learners among you in Key Stage 2, to achieve higher standards in English and mathematics.
- The school needs to improve the outdoor area for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes by covering part of it so that they can make maximum use of it.

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