

Summerhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104882
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308695
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Thompson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mrs Laura Nelson
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Poverty Lane Maghull Liverpool Merseyside L31 3DT
Telephone number	0151 5261343
Fax number	0151 5265958

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school serves a catchment area with the full range of social and economic circumstances. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards. The headteacher is currently seconded to an advisory post for three days each week.

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. It has some outstanding features. Pupils of all levels of ability flourish in the school's supportive and happy atmosphere. As a result, the school has the support and appreciation of the vast majority of parents.

Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards. They achieve well so that by the end of Year 6 they reach above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given exceptional support and included fully in all that the school has to offer. Consequently, they make similarly good progress to their classmates.

Foremost among the factors that combine to make this a successful school is the way it promotes pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils are open, friendly and courteous. They get on well together, listen carefully to each other and respect each other's opinions. Their exemplary behaviour and attitudes contribute a great deal to the calm and purposeful learning environment evident throughout the school. The great majority of pupils are articulate and confident. In part, this is due to the way that teachers encourage them to risk being wrong and to learn from it. Above all, they have a keen awareness of the needs of others, especially for those most vulnerable among them. They enjoy their learning and most contribute well to lessons. Pupils take responsibility eagerly and work well in groups or individually. This, together with their above average standards in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), means that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' good achievement is underpinned by good teaching of a well designed curriculum that meets their needs well. Teachers plan lessons that are varied, interesting and which bring learning to life. Teachers' marking varies in how well it gives pupils pointers for improvement. When advice is given, for example, on making better use of paragraphs in writing, it is not always clear that it has been followed up by pupils or teachers. Consequently, opportunities to help accelerate pupils' progress are missed.

The school provides outstanding social and emotional guidance for its pupils. They are helped to resolve difficulties and to become independent. Well established and very effective links with other agencies help to ensure that the most appropriate support is available for those in need.

Parents are well informed and the school works hard to involve them in their children's education.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides strong leadership in a continuous drive for improvement with the able support of the deputy headteacher. Robust and effective action has been taken to deal with the issues that led to a drop in performance in 2007. The governing body carries out its responsibilities well, providing professional expertise for the benefit of the school. The school's evaluation of its work is used effectively to identify priorities and to set targets for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good, with some strong features. Children enter with broadly average attainment in all areas of their learning. They get off to a good start because of a good introductory programme that parents greatly appreciate. Children's needs

are identified carefully so that good teaching, together with appropriate support, enables all children to make good progress.

Good leadership and management ensure that activities are planned effectively to build on prior experiences and identified learning needs. Good links with outside agencies ensure that the most appropriate support is given to those who require additional help. Clear routines provide structure and stability to support children's development. As a result, children show a high degree of confidence and display positive attitudes to their learning. The great majority are well on course to meet the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Regular communication between staff and parents has a positive impact upon children's personal development. The indoor areas are interesting and provide good support for an appropriate focus on personal development and basic skills, as well as the wider curriculum. However, the facilities for outdoor learning and play do not provide the same degree of challenge and stimulation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that when teachers mark pupils' work they provide pointers on how to improve and make sure that pupils act upon them.
- Improve the facilities for outdoor learning and play for younger children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From a broadly average starting point, pupils achieve well throughout the school, with no significant differences in the progress of different groups. The school identified a number of factors that were leading to underachievement in Key Stage 1 and has resolved them successfully. As a result, there was considerable improvement in standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the Year 2 teacher assessments in 2007. The greatest improvement was in writing, indicating the success of a number of initiatives linked to professional development and training. The results in Year 6 national tests were consistently above average in the years following the last inspection but showed a sharp fall in 2007. Results were average in English and science but below average in mathematics. A significant minority of pupils did not do as well as they should. The school identified a number of factors that coincided to affect the performance of this group of pupils, not least of which was unreliable data that had an impact on measuring progress. Matters have now been successfully resolved so that currently, pupils are on course to meet their challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Excellent personal development and attitudes are important factors in pupils' good achievement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils gain confidence in an atmosphere of trust and respect. They sensitively articulate personal feelings and concerns in lessons and circle time. Pupils develop very good social skills. They contribute well to community events and are responsive to local and national charity appeals. They say that they enjoy coming to school because 'lessons are fun' and 'there is a calm atmosphere'. This is reflected in their good attendance and the enthusiasm that they show in lessons, particularly for the wide range of practical activities. Pupils seize eagerly the opportunities they are given to take responsibility. The school is very effective in raising their awareness of other cultures. The school council is active in voicing pupils' views and has had a hand in improving school

facilities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of exercise and healthy eating. They participate enthusiastically in sports and games and make sensible meal choices at lunchtime. Their environmental awareness is strong with pupils taking responsibility for dealing with a number of issues, for example, recycling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The keynote of lessons throughout the school is the good working atmosphere. This results from teachers' consistently high expectations of work and behaviour coupled with pupils' enthusiastic response. Lessons are well prepared, particularly in the way that support staff are included in planning. As a result, teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and often to the learning of the whole class. Excellent relationships are a key factor in lesson time being used to the full because little time is lost managing any misbehaviour. ICT is used very effectively to engage and sustain pupils' interest and also to help their understanding. Although day-to-day assessment techniques are a particular focus of the school's development planning and training, questioning methods are not consistently implemented. Teachers usually use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding. However, occasionally, opportunities are missed to ensure that all pupils have answers to offer. This means that it is not clear whether pupils have understood and are keeping up.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curricular provision has a positive impact upon pupils' enjoyment of learning and their personal development. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate. Most are willing to apply their learning thoughtfully and creatively. They are accustomed to reflecting on and expressing their thoughts and feelings because of the many opportunities to do so in subjects such as English and art. The strong focus on creativity is seen in pupils' high quality art work. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are continually reinforced. Intervention programmes to boost learning and support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are of excellent quality and have a significant impact upon their good progress. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of educational visits and visitors; including specialist sports coaches, residential visits, and out-of-school clubs and activities. A well planned programme for personal, social, and health education ensures pupils know how to stay fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides exemplary care and support for pupils. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and that there is always someone they can turn to if they have difficulties. Arrangements for safeguarding and risk assessment meet requirements. Teachers know their pupils very well and are committed to their well-being. Pupils work in a safe and attractive environment which helps them to focus on their learning. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. For example, an annual report is sent home complete with their children's targets for future learning. Pupils know the targets set for them in lessons. Very good arrangements ease pupils'

transition both between classes and for the next stage of their education. The school works very well with other agencies for the benefit of pupils' education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The complementary skills of the headteacher and deputy headteacher enable them to share the school's management competently during the headteacher's secondment. Together with the subject coordinators they have developed a good system to continuously review the school's performance. This enables priorities for improvement to be identified and tackled through professional development and training. The effectiveness of the approach is to be seen in the improvements made to the mathematics curriculum and in the improved standards of reading and writing. A particularly good example of the common sense of purpose established among staff is the approach taken to the redesigning of art teaching throughout the school. Deficiencies identified as a result of a review of the curriculum were tackled through training and the support of outside expertise. The successful result is a range of creative experiences that enthuses pupils and contributes well to their personal development. The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. Leadership has established a highly inclusive school that enables pupils of all levels of ability to benefit from all it has to offer. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	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	2
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	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 Summerhill Primary School, Liverpool, L31 3DT

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave both the inspectors when we visited your school. We greatly enjoyed the conversations we had with so many of you and hearing how much you enjoyed being in the school. We were very impressed by your courtesy, excellent behaviour and attitudes - you are a credit to your school, your parents and yourselves.

You will be pleased to know that we agree with you that yours is a good school. The school is run well. Everyone cares for you exceptionally well so that you feel safe and valued. You also show great care and concern for others. You are taught well so that you make good progress. Lessons are enjoyable and there are lots of interesting things to do, both in and out of lessons. It was good to see how much you enjoy your work - particularly the jelly sculptures! You get on and work well together. You listen well to each other and respect other people's ideas. This contributes a great deal to the good working atmosphere in the classrooms.

Part of our job is to suggest ways that will help the school to be even better. We asked it to do two things. First, for your teachers to make sure that you have clear pointers to help you improve when your work is marked. You can help by making sure that you take notice of the advice you are given. Second, we have asked the school to provide the younger children with more facilities for outdoor learning and play.

Thank you again for all the help you gave us. We wish you well for the future.