

# Liscard Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 104994           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Wirral           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308730           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 13–14 March 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Frank Carruthers |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 675  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Malcolm Thornton                                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Rosemary Littler                               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 7 June 2004  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Withens Lane<br>Wallasey<br>Merseyside<br>CH45 7NQ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0151 638 3910                                      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0151 638 8757                                      |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is one of the largest primary schools in the region. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small percentage speak English as an additional language. The school has several awards: the Basic Skills Award, the Gold Active Play Mark, the Charter Mark for football, the Bronze Healthy Schools Award, the Green Flag and Investors in People. Since the last inspection there has been a change of headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for pupils; has a number of strengths and is improving. Dynamic leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum in a comparatively short period of time. Senior staff are lifting the expectations of all staff and promoting better achievement of pupils. The full impact of their initiatives, however, is yet to be translated into higher standards, which are currently below average overall in Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not yet high enough.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They are polite, helpful and friendly, and are caring and considerate towards others. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, say the school rules are fair and appreciate the rewards they earn. Pupils know how to keep safe and lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. These positive outcomes are the result of the good quality of care, guidance and support the school provides. Partnerships with agencies and other schools benefit the welfare and learning of pupils well.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good, though this has not consistently been the case in recent years. Improvements introduced by the headteacher have eliminated inadequacies in a number of aspects of provision. Through much more effective systems for tracking pupils' progress, the staff now have a clear understanding of how pupils are achieving and what to do if any are underperforming. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced by the rich curriculum that includes many interesting visitors and out-of-school visits. Parents responded positively about the school in the inspectors' questionnaire and over half of all respondents, a very high proportion, chose to write very supportive comments, such as 'All the teachers are very approachable and caring towards the pupils' and 'My son always comes home with a positive attitude about his lessons and is keen to explain what he has learnt.'

Leadership, management and governance are good. Thanks to the work of the headteacher and deputy, procedures to evaluate how well the school is doing are robust. Senior staff are rigorously self-critical and know that the standards pupils reach in English and mathematics are not yet high enough. They have also raised governors' awareness of underachievement and governors now take a much more active role in questioning and challenging senior leaders. However, senior staff erred on the side of caution when judging the effectiveness of improvements as satisfactory when in fact they are good. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has addressed all the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, except in raising standards of reading and writing in Key Stage 1. Under the direction of the leadership team, the school is tackling underachievement well and has good capacity to improve. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children start in the Nursery with skills below those usually seen in all six areas of learning, especially in communication and language and in mathematical development. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they enter Year 1; their skills are just below those typical for their age, although they remain lowest in the above aspects. The strong emphasis placed on personal development results in good progress in this area of learning and most children

reach the levels usually seen at their age. Good care and support and the welcoming environment make children feel safe and secure and ready to learn. The new Foundation Stage classrooms and designated outdoor area are a big improvement on the previous accommodation. Progress was somewhat disrupted by the move to this new accommodation and there is no covered outdoor space so children cannot always choose to learn outdoors. The school is addressing this deficiency. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Improvements to the assessment systems mean that staff now track and monitor progress closely. In the Reception classes, children often assess their own work using a simple 'traffic lights' method.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the achievement of children in the Foundation Stage in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.

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**

Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. Specific measures to improve the rate of progress they make have yet to have a full impact on standards at the end of Year 2 but there are clear indications that new approaches, for instance to the teaching of writing, are helping. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average overall. The assessment of pupils' progress is now much more rigorous than in the past and has corrected a misleading and over-optimistic view of standards prior to 2007. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 and actions taken by senior staff to halt a declining trend in standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 have been successful. These include eliminating inadequate teaching and improving the use that staff make of assessment. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and average in science and more pupils are on target to reach the higher Level 5 than in recent years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates and achieve the challenging targets in their individual education plans. The very few learning English as an additional language make rapid gains in their learning and do well by the time they leave in Year 6.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All staff work hard to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence successfully. Consequently, pupils feel secure, valued and respected, enjoy school and behave well. Pupils are encouraged to walk or cycle safely to school and show a good understanding of health matters. For instance, they particularly enjoyed the Junior Chef activities during Health Week. They report that they feel safe in school and know just what they would do if they encountered any bullying. They trust the staff to help them if they have a problem and know they can use the classroom 'Worry Boxes' in confidence. Pupils relish the opportunities to undertake responsibilities to help the school community, willingly acting as play leaders, school councillors, first aiders and monitors. There are good links with the community and pupils are keen to raise funds for charities and enjoy non-uniform days.

Satisfactory academic skills, together with good skills of information and communication technology (ICT) and personal development, prepare pupils satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. Attendance is average, but some parents do not appreciate that taking children out of school for term-time holidays can hinder their progress, despite the school's best efforts to counter this.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and staff mainly overcome the constraints of some areas of the building which are not conducive to effective teaching. Lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Classroom management is consistently good and stimulating learning environments contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning in all key stages. Pupils work hard because they enjoy the interesting range of activities using ICT equipment and interactive whiteboards. Teachers mark pupils' work very carefully and pupils respond well to the useful comments, as this shows them how to improve their work. In addition there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own and others' work. In an outstanding lesson, pupils listened as one pupil read aloud their writing and were given the task of reporting on how well the pupil had used adjectives and other parts of speech in it. This greatly enhanced pupils' learning. Less successful lessons resulted when resources were too few or the level of challenge in the work pupils were set was not as good as it could be. In general, teaching assistants support pupils' learning well and the school is working to improve any inconsistencies in their use across the school. The introduction of new initiatives such as the 'Big Write' programme is improving pupils' learning. However, pupils' achievement is not yet high enough because their impact is yet to be fully felt.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has broadened. ICT remains a strength and the school rightfully places great emphasis on the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum now has a more thematic approach, with increased attention given to the foundation subjects, resulting in work of high quality in these areas. The school provides pupils with an interesting series of visits, both day and residential, ranging from a walk around Chester with a Roman soldier, to a visit to the local postal sorting office. The number of extra-curricular activities on offer has increased and many clubs are oversubscribed. Parents are kept very well informed about the work pupils cover through regular workshops and booklets designed to meet their needs. Curriculum enrichment has also resulted in greater enjoyment, more excitement and increased engagement from pupils. However, the full effects of the revised curriculum are yet to be seen consistently in terms of pupils' academic results.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff at all levels are very committed to both the academic and the pastoral welfare of pupils in their care. Statutory safeguarding procedures are in place and there have been considerable improvements to the safety and appearance of the building and grounds for the benefit of the whole-school community. A system of detailed targets for pupils has been introduced that are

updated half termly and shared with the parents. While this system has only been in place for a relatively short period of time, it is very well established and the pupils have an impressive understanding of their targets and what they need to do to improve. Indeed, there is some evidence already that this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, although it has not had time to result in consistently higher test results. The school keeps a very careful and well documented eye on the needs of each individual pupil. This is particularly true with regard to those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has re-energised the staff and given them a renewed vision and sense of direction to tackle declining standards. The senior leadership team is now more focused upon raising standards across the whole school. Recent initiatives such as a much improved pupil tracking system are increasingly effective in monitoring pupils' progress and raising standards. Staff have become increasingly aware of the important part they all play in helping pupils to achieve their potential. The headteacher and deputy form a strong team who plan strategically across the curriculum for the achievement of all pupils. Subject leaders scrutinise planning and pupils' work and are beginning to consider the pupils' voice in more detail. The headteacher has the full support of the staff, parents and all stakeholders. However, the full effects of these new systems are yet to be seen. Governors now have a much more effective, strategic approach to the drive to raise standards and they work closely with the headteacher to push new initiatives forward in a focused way.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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?   | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?                                  | 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 | 3 |

### 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?   | 2 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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                     | 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  | 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 Liscard Primary School, Wallasey, CH45 7NQ

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.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. This means there are some things that the school does well but there are other things the staff need to do to make the school better. These are some of the things that are good.

- All the staff take good care of you and help you all to be fit, safe and healthy.
- Your behaviour is good and you are growing into sensible students who take responsibilities seriously and want to learn.
- The staff teach you well and have given you clear targets for improvement in English and mathematics.
- The staff provide you with very good opportunities for sports, visits, clubs after school and to have interesting visitors.
- The headteacher and senior staff have done lots of good things to help you to improve in your work, for example introducing 'Big Write'.

These are the things that we have asked the school to improve.

- Raise the standards that you reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Develop children's skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and mathematics in the Foundation 1 and 2 classes.

As you can see, you have a big part to play in this: know your targets, work hard in lessons and do your very best to improve!