

Lingham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105005
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308736
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Ceridwen Jones
Headteacher	Mr S Leigh
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
School address	Townmeadow Lane Moreton Wirral Merseyside CH46 7UQ
Telephone number	0151 6775381
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school is situated in a mixed residential area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a very small proportion from other heritages and most of these pupils speak English as their home language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly smaller than in most other schools.

The school holds the Investors in People award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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 standard of education for its pupils. Although standards are now higher than in the previous two years, there remains much to be done to improve further, although the drive for improvement has begun well.

Leadership has been strengthened by the recent appointment of a new deputy headteacher. Leadership and management are satisfactory at the present time because several new initiatives have yet to have an appreciable impact on standards. The school has several major strengths, not least its well-developed corporate ethos, with an effective teaching and support staff team united in its commitment to the headteachers' vision for school improvement. The Foundation Stage is effective and gives children a good beginning to their education. From a below average starting point on entry to Nursery, children reach broadly average standards by the end of the Reception year.

Standards have already begun to rise. In 2007, they were above the national average in science in Key Stage 2. They were broadly average in English and mathematics, representing an improvement on previous years. The standards in Key Stage 1 also improved, but were still below average. All of this was accomplished as the result of consistently good teaching and a whole-school drive, directed by the leadership team, to raise standards in writing and mathematics. This drive has carried through into the current year, bringing with it the introduction of a new scheme to address low standards in reading in Key Stage 1, based on sounds and letter recognition. Consequently, the school can now point to evidence from its assessments which shows a continuing rise in literacy and numeracy standards in all its year groups. At this time, the school is now on track to meet its next set of targets, which include raising the attainment of more able pupils and bringing standards at Key Stage 1 closer to the national average in 2008.

The school has begun to address some limitations identified in its curriculum, which has traditionally been taught in discrete subjects. An initiative to make links between subjects, to add interest and enjoyment and to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills across subject areas is still at a developmental stage and has not yet made a measurable impact. A good system of marking pupils' work has been developed for English and is contributing well to their progress in this subject. Its use has not yet been extended to some other subjects, for example, mathematics and science, so that the quality of the guidance pupils are given to improve their work is not consistent.

Although many aspects of pupils' personal development are fostered well, the poor attendance of a minority of pupils is a long-term problem which, despite reasonable efforts, the school has been unable to resolve. Pupils enjoy school life and are well behaved and cooperative. Most parents are appreciative of the school's work. The school's inclusive ethos is developed well. Pastoral care is effective and the school works well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Its provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is managed well and this helps to ensure their good progress. The school's capacity to make further improvement is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's admission to Nursery is managed sensitively, ensuring that they feel safe and happy from the start. This is particularly important for the high proportion of children whose attainment on entry is below the expectations for their age. Children's personal development, their confidence and self-esteem are nurtured well. Adults in school have high expectations of them, provide clear routines and enable them to build positive relationships. The quality of teaching is consistently good and enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning. The well-led staff team provides a good range of stimulating learning activities and adults use questioning and discussion particularly well to promote the development of children's thinking and investigative skills. As a result of this good provision, children grow in confidence and their learning progresses well. They enjoy choosing and participating in activities and they collaborate well with each other. Opportunities for learning outdoors, are limited, although action is currently being taken to remedy this. By the end of the Reception, children achieve standards that are broadly as expected of them nationally. Transition to Key Stage 1 is managed well, with the curriculum planned carefully to ensure that the emotional and learning needs of all the children are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve levels of attendance especially for those pupils who are poor attenders.
- Improve the quality of marking in line with the good practice found in English, especially in mathematics and science.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to practice and improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills through work in other subject areas.

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

In 2007, standards in Key Stage 1 were below average overall and particularly low in reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in all subjects was also below average. School assessment data for the current year shows rising standards and improved progress in all subjects in Key Stage 1. This links to the positive impact of new teaching strategies in literacy and numeracy. Standards in Key Stage 2 were also higher than in the previous two years in 2007. They were broadly average in English and mathematics, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels expected of them nationally was below average. Standards in science were above the national average, reflecting good teaching in this subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to the effective support they receive. In the current year, girls' attainment has risen and is now equal to that of boys, closing a gender gap that appeared in 2007. Standards in Key Stage 2 are continuing to rise: this can be seen in the school's data for progress in English and mathematics for all the year groups and is directly linked to improvements in teaching and learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong. They adhere well to the code of conduct in school and enjoy positive relationships with adults and each other. The school has worked hard to eliminate aggressive or unkind behaviour and pupils behave well in school and are friendly and polite. They are confident that staff will help them with any problems that may arise. The physical education curriculum provides good opportunities to be active. Pupils are aware of healthy lifestyle issues and of how to keep themselves safe. Their spiritual development is fostered well through assemblies and the religious education curriculum. Pupils say lessons are interesting and playtimes are fun. The school council is starting to play a part in making decisions, although this is at an early stage of development. Older pupils also enjoy managing the healthy snack shop at playtime and this participation helps prepare pupils for their future economic well-being. Pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own is underdeveloped, reflecting some of the limitations of the curriculum. Attendance has been unsatisfactory for several years despite the school's efforts to improve it. Although a range of strategies to encourage regular and sustained attendance have been developed, they have not yet proved to be effective in engaging the full cooperation of a minority of families. This creates a barrier to progress for a significant minority of pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching is bringing about improved progress across the school. It is underpinned by careful planning, good subject knowledge and good teamwork between teachers and skilled teaching assistants. Staff provide a good variety of activities in lessons which take pupils' differing learning needs into account. The pace of learning is brisk and the level of challenge and support is appropriate for all abilities, including pupils with additional learning needs. Questioning is used well to prompt pupils to think more deeply about their responses in lessons and this helps them to learn effectively. They are encouraged to work with partners and in groups: this promotes their confidence and helps make them enthusiastic learners. Interactive whiteboards are used well to add interest in lessons. Improved assessment procedures enable teachers to monitor progress closely and to intervene and support any underachievement strategically. Although the full impact of this has not yet been seen in national tests, it is a key contributory factor to rising standards across the school. The quality of marking is variable, although it is very good in English. In other subjects, especially mathematics and science, there is insufficient guidance to help pupils to know how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is matched to pupils' ages and abilities, ensuring that they develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a logical manner. In recent years, the school has wisely given high priority to developing strategies to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics; these improvements are starting to impact positively on the standards and progress pupils achieve. In the current year, work has begun to develop links between subjects in order to provide further opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills and also to enliven the curriculum. This is at a very early stage of development, however,

so its impact on learning and progress has not yet been tested. A range of extra-curricular activities adds enrichment to the curriculum. These are supported by a programme of visitors to school and visits to places of interest. Older pupils have opportunities to go on residential trips. Information and communication technology skills are taught well and pupils use computers confidently to present their work and as a tool for research.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils and parents recognise and appreciate this. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well established. The school has made good partnership links with a range of outside agencies to help support vulnerable pupils and pupils with additional learning needs. Effective procedures are in place for early identification of those in need of extra support. The school makes good provision for these pupils, who benefit from its inclusive ethos and progress well. Good links with the high school help to ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The recently improved assessment and tracking procedures now ensure that pupils are given accurate and challenging targets. This development has not yet had time to impact fully on standards. Informative marking in English is making pupils more aware about their own progress and the goals they might aspire to. This is not yet the case for mathematics and science where, although pupils have targets to aim for, guidance through marking is less effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The experienced headteacher's vision for improvement is shared across the school community. The recent restructuring of the leadership team and the appointment of a new deputy headteacher have strengthened and invigorated school leadership. Important whole school improvements in teaching and learning in English and mathematics are progressing well. The full impact on standards of these advances cannot yet be assessed, but early indications of improvements in pupils' progress are evident. The school's leaders are aware that there is more to do and have set challenging and aspirational targets. Senior staff are contributing to the monitoring of the quality of provision in school and this is helping to sustain and further develop the good quality of teaching and learning across the school. They have begun to redesign the curriculum to help engage pupils' interests more and help them to achieve as well as they possibly can. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is managed well and this underpins the good progress they make. The supportive governing body is developing its capacity to hold the school to account and to act as its critical friend.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	2

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	3
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	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?	2
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	2
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning.

We found that the school is giving you a satisfactory education and that many good initiatives are being introduced to raise standards and to help the school improve. We judge that:

- you are well taught and you work hard in your lessons
- letters and sounds and the Big Write are helping you to improve your literacy skills
- it is pleasing to see so many of you are reaching your targets in English and mathematics. Keep up the good work!
- your behaviour is good and you are friendly and polite
- the staff look after you well and you enjoy being in school.

We have asked the headteacher and the staff to make some improvements.

- To make sure those pupil who do not attend regularly improve their attendance.
- To mark your work, especially in mathematics and science in the same good way your English work is marked so that you know what it is you need to do better.
- To find more opportunities for you to practice your literacy and numeracy skills in your work in other subjects.

Staff will need the help of some of your families to improve attendance, especially those of you who do not attend regularly. It is so important for you to come to school regularly, so that you do not miss out on anything and so your learning is not held back. You can all help with the other issues by continuing to be happy learners and doing your best.

With my very best wishes for the future.