

Thingwall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105051
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308752
Inspection date	5 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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	219
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs C Davies
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2003
School address	Pensby Road Thingwall Wirral Merseyside CH61 7UG
Telephone number	0151 648 4885
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, care, guidance and support, leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the analysis of pupils' work and of assessment data and other documents. In addition, discussions were held with pupils, parents, the chair of governors and key staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupils at this average sized over-subscribed school come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but the majority are of White British heritage. A smaller proportion than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The school has gained a number of awards including Investors in People status, the National Healthy Schools Award and a Silver Artsmark.

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 and some of its work is outstanding. Parents are very keen to praise the excellent quality of care and support their children receive. They cite this aspect as most important in enabling their children to be very happy in school, to gain self-confidence and to become concerned young citizens.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and her experienced leadership team have high expectations of all aspects of pupils' development and of staff's expertise and commitment. As a result, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in all subjects, in both the Year 2 teacher assessments and the Year 6 national tests. Senior managers are aware, through the rigorous analysis of test results and of pupils' work, of what it is that most needs improving. The successful action taken to address most of these issues has led to significant improvements in the quality of pupils' writing and in teaching and learning over the last two years. The school knows that in mathematics the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory rather than good, as it is in English and science. The action taken to address this has yet to have an impact on raising achievement. Similarly recognised is the fact that the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the highest standard in reading has fallen to below average over the last two years. Despite action taken to halt this decline, it is too early to identify an improvement.

Pupils justifiably report that they have an interesting and rich curriculum and that they are well taught. They particularly praise the evidently very good relationships in classrooms and how helpful and understanding their teachers and other adults are. Pupils also point out that they have lots of different sorts of after-school clubs to choose from. They appreciate that pupils in Years 1 and 2 also have activities arranged for them. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of visits they go on, with Year 6 pupils greatly looking forward to their residential field trip.

Pupils are articulate and very positive about their work. They respond very well to opportunities to take responsibility as school councillors, as playground managers and as monitors carrying out a range of tasks. Pupils contribute significantly to decision making that affects their healthy eating and play facilities and to the smooth running of the school. In lessons, they enthusiastically strive to achieve the clear objectives set for their learning and to achieve the longer-term targets set for their improvement. They also respond well to the many opportunities provided for them to apply their good basic skills across a range of subjects. Their ability to apply these skills, their good attendance and punctuality and their ability to work cooperatively, mean that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their learning is well planned and the support they have is of such good quality. As a result, most reach expected standards by the time they leave school. Pupils' understanding of fair play is evident in practice and they behave extremely well. They have a strong sense of community. This is exemplified by older pupils caring for, and sharing in the learning of, younger children and in their obvious compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. The close links the school has forged with the adjacent special school has many positive benefits for pupils' personal and social development. For example, they promote strong relationships and mutual respect between pupils of both schools. Other very positive partnerships exist with parents and local schools

that contribute well to pupils' ability to complete homework tasks and to develop physical education skills.

Strong leadership from senior managers has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection, notably in the more effective contribution of subject leaders in promoting higher standards. This good improvement, allied to the rigour with which senior leaders analyse the school's work and initiate successful action to address relative weaknesses, demonstrates a good capacity to improve the school further. Governance is effective and governors' prudent financial planning and budgetary control contribute well to the good value for money the school provides.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are well provided for in the Reception class. They enter school with skills that are either as expected for their age, in their communication, language and literacy and aspects of their mathematical development, or above those expected in other areas of their learning. The very good arrangements for the transfer of children from their pre-school into the Reception class contribute very well to how quickly they settle into the new routines. They make good progress because they have access to good quality resources and are given a wide range of experiences to promote their knowledge and ability to learn from instruction and from play. On occasions, staff do not always seize fully opportunities to promote children's language skills during all activities. Children enjoy self-registering and choosing some of the activities in which they engage. By the time they enter Year 1, all are working securely in the six areas of their learning and a significant minority exceed the targets set for them at that stage. The strongest area of learning is in their personal, social and emotional development, providing a very solid foundation for their outstanding personal development in the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English and in science.
- Increase the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the higher Level 3 in reading to above average, as it is in writing and in mathematics.

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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?	2
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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 Thingwall Primary School, Wirral, CH61 7UG

What a warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. You were very polite and helpful and very keen to tell me how happy you were. I agree that you go to a good school, have a good education and that you do well in your lessons. Many of you and your parents thought, with good reason, that you were very well looked after and that your headteacher and the other adults who work with you help you to be confident, caring young people.

The reason why you do so well in lessons is because your teachers set work that interests you and keeps you on your toes. The school council told me how much they liked the many different clubs they could go to after school and that they really appreciated mixing with some of the children from Stanley School.

Your headteacher and the other teachers who help to run the school have good ideas about how to improve the school even further. I have asked them to do two things. First, to make sure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 make as good progress in mathematics as they do in English and science. Second, to help those of you in Year 2, who find learning a bit easier than most other children, make faster progress in your reading.

Good luck for the future and keep playing and working really hard.