

William Stockton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111085
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310497
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
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	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Rooney
Headteacher	Miss Moria Williams
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Heathfield Road Ellesmere Port Merseyside CH65 8DH
Telephone number	0151 3551650
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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 close to the centre of Ellesmere Port. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. More than a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above the national average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from other heritages, including Bengali, Chinese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Slovakian and Turkish. The school is designated by its local authority as a primary resource centre, supporting provision in Ellesmere Port for pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. The school holds the Investors in People Award, the Healthy Schools Award, the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Sports 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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher has been proactive in setting an agenda for positive change. The school has a long history of low standards and the need to improve attainment was indicated at its last inspection. An improved leadership structure allows energetic and committed senior staff to lead their teams effectively in the drive for school improvement. The governing body plays an active role in helping to assure the quality of the school's work. Although some of the self-evaluation judgements before the inspection were over-estimated, the leaders know the school well and have a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. In 2005, the school moved into a new building, which provides a bright and supportive learning environment.

The school gives high priority to pupils' personal development and their welfare and provides good care and support. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' positive attitudes to school and to learning, in their good behaviour and in the very good relationships that prevail across the school. The school's inclusive ethos helps pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language to access good provision and make good progress. The school welcomes and supports families new to the country, by providing adult education classes, through the work of a bi-lingual teaching assistant and specialist English language teaching. Pupils have good awareness of issues around healthy living and personal safety. They are enthusiastic about their school and enjoy their lessons.

In 2007, test results in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 matched up to national standards for the first time. Although this was a significant achievement, the improvement was not consistent across subjects and across the age groups. The school still has much to do to bring about improved progress in all areas of the curriculum in order to help assure the pupils' future success and economic well-being. This is particularly true in English where standards are still below average in all key stages. Work has begun to make the curriculum more vibrant and engaging, but this development is at too early a stage for its impact to be realised. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. While there are instances of good and outstanding practice the quality is uneven across the school. As a result, progress is held back in some lessons, because pupils have too few opportunities to practise their skills. The quality of the guidance given to pupils to improve their work is also variable and so pupils do not always know what to do to improve their work, although there are early signs that this is improving. Rigorous monitoring systems are now in place. Appropriate strategies for raising the overall quality of teaching and for raising standards in reading and writing across the school have been introduced, but it is too early to assess their impact.

The school has taken effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection. Attendance continues to be an issue for concern, with a minority of families finding it difficult to get their children to school regularly and on time. The learning mentor provides positive support where this is the case, but further improvement is required to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged because of lateness or poor attendance.

The many new strategies in place are clearly leading the school in the right direction to raise standards. Although it is too soon to see their full impact, there are many encouraging signs of improvement. The school's capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start and to become happy and receptive learners. Skills on entry to Nursery are very low, with many children requiring extensive individual support to enable them to access early learning. The well-led Foundation Stage team effectively nurtures children's personal and social development through building their confidence and self-esteem. Vulnerable children and those with additional learning needs are very well cared for. Good teaching results in good progress, in relation to the children's starting points. They develop very positive attitudes to all aspects of learning. New initiatives to improve children's communication, language and literacy skills are currently being introduced, but it is too early to assess their impact. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to meet children's needs. There are good opportunities for learning through investigation with a range of appropriate and stimulating indoor and outdoor activities, which develops children's independence well. The outdoor learning environment is satisfactory. Close collaboration between staff underpins good support for pupils on transition to Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards across the school, especially in English.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all classes.
- Improve levels of punctuality and attendance by working closely with those pupils and their families for whom this is a particular issue.

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

Standards rose significantly in 2007 but, because of the inconsistent quality of teaching across the school, the improvement in pupils' progress remains uneven across age groups, ability groups and subjects. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils start Year 1 with below average standards. By the end of Key Stage 1 standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level expected of them in Key Stage 1 increased in 2007, although it was below the national expectations. Standards in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 showed considerable improvement in 2007 and are now broadly average. Standards in English improved steadily over two years from 2004, but were below average in 2007. In Key Stage 2 in 2007, standards at the higher level improved in all three subjects, but were still below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their abilities and starting points, as a consequence of the effective provision the school makes for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are sensitive towards the different beliefs and lifestyles of others. They look after each other well, understand the difference between right and wrong and relate

well to each other. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and show respect for the views of others. Behaviour is good. Pupils move around the school safely and play sensibly in the playground, where a variety of activities are available. Older pupils promote good citizenship by helping and supporting younger pupils. The learning mentor works closely with families of children with poor attendance, as well as those whose children are frequently late. Despite the efforts of the school, attendance is still below average. Members of the student council talk proudly about their school, saying, 'Not a single child gets left out'. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating. They take good advantage of the many extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good and outstanding practice. Well-planned lessons provide effectively for pupils of varying ability. Teachers use questioning well to encourage the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Some teachers have begun to encourage pupils to assess their own understanding of what they have learned. Where this is happening, pupils gain a good awareness of what the next steps in learning will be and what they will need to do to make progress. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively for display and presentation in lessons. The best lessons move along briskly. Too often, however, pace and interest wane because pupils are kept sitting for too long on the carpet. When this is the case, there is not enough activity time in the lesson for pupils to develop and practise their skills; this limits the progress they make. Teaching assistants have a good range of skills and experience. They work effectively with groups and individuals and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In some classes, they contribute well to the effectiveness of whole class teaching, working in partnership with the class teacher, but this aspect of their role is not always fully developed. Very good relationships contribute to good standards of behaviour and pupils' enjoyment of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables most pupils to learn satisfactorily. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are well provided for and make good progress. Recent initiatives to introduce more creative learning and enjoyment for pupils are beginning to take hold. Their impact, though not yet evident in the quality of pupils' writing, has begun to appear in improved mathematics and science results. Recent improved opportunities allow pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects, but it is too early to assess the impact of this. The curriculum for personal, social, health education and citizenship is firmly established. The range of enrichment activities adds breadth to pupils' learning. The good opportunities to be active and develop skills in extra-curricular sports clubs contribute well to pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and parents agree that their children are in safe hands. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is exceptionally good, with learning mentors creating

a climate of trust and reassurance for pupils and parents. There are good links with external support agencies. Pupils receive good guidance about bullying and racism and, consequently, they feel safe in school. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are in place. Risk assessments and safety checks around the school are carried out appropriately. Attendance is monitored rigorously. The school works hard to counter the negative effects that the poor punctuality and attendance of a minority of pupils have on progress. There are effective systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress and assessment information is used well to plan specific learning support for groups or individual pupils. Day to day guidance, through teachers' marking and the use of targets, has not been clear enough over time to show pupils how best to improve their work, although a positive impact of recent action to improve marking is evident in pupils' books.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has fostered the development of a collaborative culture, uniting staff and governors in her clear vision and the drive for school improvement. She has successfully promoted pupils' good personal development and has established effective pastoral support systems. The improvement in standards in 2007 is early evidence of the positive impact of her good leadership. The management of some aspects of provision requires further attention, particularly the uneven quality of teaching across the school, which is currently standing in the way of rapid and sustained progress of pupils. Appropriate measures to address this have been identified and have begun to be put in place this term. However, it is too early to measure their impact. The role of middle management has been developed well. Senior staff now play an active and important role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of all aspects of the school's work and this is already having a positive impact on standards. A well-informed governing body provides strong support. Provision for pupils who are new to the country and those with additional learning needs is led and managed well, enabling them to progress well in relation to their starting points and abilities.

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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	2

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?	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?	3
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?	2

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us so welcome 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 really enjoyed meeting you and chatting with you and finding out about all the things that happen at your school. The school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education.

We were pleased to see how well you all get on with each other. We think that the school takes care of you well. We saw that children's behaviour is good and that you all try hard to do your best in lessons. Because of this and because of the improvements in the curriculum, standards are starting to rise at William Stockton School, especially in mathematics and science. We have asked the headteacher and the staff to help you to do even better in English, mathematics and science right through the school and to make sure that all your lessons are as good as they can be. They have already started to work on this, as you probably know. You can help by continuing to be happy learners and always doing your best.

We have also asked the headteacher to try to improve your attendance and punctuality. She is going to need help from you and your families for this. It is very important for all of you to get to school on time and not take days off from school without a very good reason. Good attendance will help you to achieve to the best of your ability and will stand you in good stead for the future. It will certainly help your school to carry on improving!

With our very best wishes for the future