

Lawrence Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130395
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	315629
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Marlene Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Mark Rigby
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Lawrence Road Liverpool Merseyside L15 0EE
Telephone number	0151 7333558
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This well above average sized primary school is situated in an inner area of Liverpool. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average. Just over half the pupils are of Black African, Bangladeshi and other White, African and Asian heritage. Over 20 languages are spoken by pupils in the school, including Arabic, Bengali and Somali. The majority of pupils from minority ethnic heritage are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school caters for an increasing number of pupils whose families are seeking asylum in this country. As a result, the movement of pupils in and out of school (pupil mobility) is about three times the average of primary schools nationally. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the local Healthy Schools Award, the Primary Quality Mark and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for pupils, whose achievement and personal development are good. Outstanding aspects of the school are the successful commitment of everyone to provide opportunities for all and appropriate provision for pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. From a starting point in Nursery of skills that are very low for their age, pupils reach standards in line with the national average in Year 6. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages make rapid strides in learning to speak English and often achieve exceptionally well by the time they leave the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of good support from staff, especially teaching assistants.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their cultural development is excellent because of the steps the school takes to celebrate the diverse richness of pupils' heritages. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and develop a good awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. Provision for their care, guidance and support is good, thanks to the work of all staff, in particular teaching assistants and learning mentors. However, levels of attendance and punctuality are too low and the measures the school has taken to improve both have not had sufficient impact since the time of the last inspection.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good. Strengths in teaching include the brisk pace of lessons, high expectations of good behaviour and effort, and the contribution to lessons made by teaching assistants. Procedures to assess how well pupils are doing and to track their progress are good. These are used well to set individual targets and to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum has an appropriate emphasis on basic skills and is enriched with a very wide range of visits, visitors and out-of-school clubs. One aspect for improvement is the curriculum for pupils in Year 1. After the first term, it does not cater sufficiently well for all pupils, especially those who need to develop skills of communication, language and literacy from a low level of attainment.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior management team lead school improvement well by rigorously checking performance and taking effective action to overcome weaknesses. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a good understanding of how the school is performing. There are good partnerships with other schools and institutions that promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspectors' questionnaires have very positive views of the school and appreciate what the school does for their children. Typical comments are: 'The staff are excellent, they listen to what the parent and the child have to say but above all they care genuinely' and 'The pupils love the school and the mixed cultures make for a very interesting environment.'

Progress since the last inspection in all aspects, except attendance, has been good and indicates a clear capacity to improve. Given the achievement of pupils and the quality of provision, the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills much lower than those expected for their age, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy.

They are well cared for and staff expectations for their progress are high. Children feel safe and become confident, choosing activities and enjoying helping. Staff manage very well the difficulties caused by a high percentage of children who join or leave at various times during the year. The support for children able to speak little English is outstanding and, as a result, these children settle quickly and achieve well. Nevertheless, by the end of the Reception year standards overall are still well below national expectations. Staff plan activities together and all areas of learning are well covered. The children's move into the first term of Year 1 is well planned and ensures that the curriculum meets their needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance and punctuality so that the school regularly meets the targets agreed with the local authority.
- Improve the curriculum in Year 1 to better support all pupils, particularly those who need to improve their communication, language and literacy skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils who remain at the school the longest make good progress thanks to good quality teaching and learning and to the outstanding support given to those learning English as an additional language. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have risen in the last two years and were in line with the national average in 2007. Standards in the current Year 6 are similar. The different ethnic groups in school make good progress and some pupils make outstanding progress given their low starting points in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well thanks to the dedicated support of staff.

Achievement for the great majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory overall but standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. There are a number of factors that account for this. Pupils start in school at all times of the year and with different needs, especially in their language development. A significant minority of families are in temporary accommodation locally and in vulnerable situations. Many have significant personal and emotional needs. As a result, pupils' achievements vary widely and only those who stay at the school for a good period of time make the necessary gains in their learning. The minority of pupils whose attendance is erratic do not achieve as well as their classmates. Because of shortcomings in the Year 1 curriculum, many pupils' progress slows, particularly those who need extra support to improve their language skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are enthusiastic, take pride in their school and have good relationships with one another and with staff. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite and well mannered. They say there are examples of poor behaviour at playtimes but they know what to do if they are concerned. Exclusions in recent years have been few and were an appropriate response to unacceptable behaviour. Pupils have a good awareness of how to look out for one another, be safe and live a fit and healthy lifestyle. There are very good opportunities to take on responsibilities in school, for example, as school councillors, monitors and buddies. Pupils' contribution to the wider local community is satisfactory. They learn how to work independently and as a team. They develop good basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and

communication technology (ICT). All these are important skills to take forward to high school. Levels of attendance and punctuality are too low, however, and have not improved since the last inspection. This is a key area to improve and the school needs the support of parents to help pupils attend regularly and punctually.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Strengths across all classes include the high quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, English as an additional language and those with behavioural difficulties. Teaching assistants make a particularly good contribution in supporting all these pupils. Teachers' planning is good, there is good pace to learning and the relationships staff have with their pupils are very positive. The management of pupils' behaviour follows the school's code of conduct well and any occasional low-level disruption is dealt with promptly. Learning mentors provide good help for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Staff use a variety of teaching strategies very effectively to keep pupils motivated and busy. This was evident in a Year 5/6 lesson, when the teacher changed strategies and switched from using the interactive whiteboard to other resources to very good effect. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive, referring back to pupils' targets and lesson objectives and identifying what pupils must do to improve. The involvement of parents in pupils' learning is underdeveloped.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum generally places a strong emphasis on language learning, literacy and numeracy and is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. Termly reviews of the curriculum are undertaken by class teachers. This helps staff to identify best practice and where there are shortfalls in resourcing. An outstanding feature of the curriculum is provision for those pupils learning English as an additional language. It is very well managed and greatly benefits from the work of highly effective bilingual assistants. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. There are effective one-to-one sessions and additional programmes of work led by two experienced coordinators and well-trained assistants. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' awareness of personal safety and a healthy lifestyle, for example, through a well-planned programme of personal and social education and effective physical education lessons. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons. These include teaching some of the major languages, such as Arabic, to pupils of all heritages. Spanish is taught in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The curriculum in Year 1, however, does not fully cater for the many pupils who are still working towards the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy by providing enough role play and speaking and listening opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

These aspects are well established strengths of the school. Very positive relationships between staff and pupils encourage pupils to feel safe and happy. Parents hold the school in high regard and have the fullest confidence in the care it provides. The school copes extremely well with the high proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of the Nursery or Reception year, for instance through highly effective induction programmes. All aspects of

health, safety, child protection and safe recruitment of staff are in place. Procedures to track the progress of pupils are good and are used effectively to identify which pupils need support. The information gathered from tracking individual pupils' progress is used well to set appropriate targets for their improvement. Measures to promote good attendance and punctuality have not had sufficient impact, partly because some parents have not been fully supportive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, who has been in post for 18 months, provides both a very clear direction for the school and an approach built on reflection and analysis. He has added to the existing strengths of the senior management team and given them a greater role in decision making, monitoring and budget control to which they have responded very well. School self-evaluation involves an effective process of reviews by class teachers. These are collated by curriculum coordinators and finally overseen by senior leaders, making the task of forward planning a shared enterprise. Rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and local authority adviser help to build on existing best practice. However, whereas the school is using targets well to raise standards of attainment, they have not met the locally agreed targets to improve attendance and this is a key focus for improvement. The school's view of itself as satisfactory overall clearly reflects where it perceived improvements were necessary. However, it has underestimated the success of its subsequent actions and this has led it to judge many aspects of its work, including the school's overall effectiveness, as satisfactory rather than good. The level of commitment of all staff is evident in their continuous effort to cater well for the diverse needs of all pupils. The determination to provide equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination is outstanding. The chair of governors provides the committed and supportive governing body with very effective leadership.

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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	3
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?	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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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

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	3
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 Lawrence Community Primary School, Liverpool, L15 0EE

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.

Yours is a good school. Here are some of the reasons why.

- The staff take good care of you all and teach you well.
- Your attitude to lessons is good, you enjoy school and behave well.
- You are doing well in English, mathematics and science and making good progress.
- Staff support pupils who are learning English from scratch exceptionally well and so those pupils make good and at times excellent progress.
- The staff provide you with very good opportunities to enjoy activities after school, go on visits and have visitors in school.
- Your headteacher and all the staff do all they can for you to make sure that you all have the chance to do well. They really do give you their best shot, so make the most of it!

To make the school even better, there are two important things for the staff to do.

- It is very important that you all attend school regularly and arrive on time, so we want the staff to get that message over to you and your parents. Pupils who miss school often fall behind in their work, find it very hard to catch up and do not do well in secondary school.
- We want the staff to look closely at the lessons for pupils in Year 1 and make sure they help you all to gain confidence in speaking and listening. For example, giving you lots of interesting things to do in the role-play areas might help you to make up really good stories to write about later.