

Norwood Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104865 |
| Local Authority | Sefton |
| Inspection number | 324118 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 February 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Mark Williams HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 405 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs J Hilton |
| Headteacher | Mr L Dumbell |
| Date of previous school inspection | May 2006 |
| School address | Norwood Crescent Southport Merseyside PR9 7DU |
| Telephone number | 01704 211960 |
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors visited 20 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and groups of children and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work in books, various documents and scrutinised the 103 parental questionnaires that were returned.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- how well pupils achieve, enjoy and display positive attitudes and attributes
- whether teaching, assessment, the curriculum, and support, guidance and care promote purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment for all pupils
- how well leaders and managers demonstrate improvement since the previous inspection, their actions are leading to consistent and embedded improvement in outcomes for all pupils, statutory requirements are met, and there is capacity for sustained improvement
- whether the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is at least satisfactory.

Information about the school

Norwood is a large primary school serving a residential area of above average social and economic advantage. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. Two Reception classes form the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enter these classes, usually from a large number of pre-school providers, with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

The school holds a number of awards including the PE Activemark and Healthy Schools status. The headteacher took up post in September 2008.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school evaluates its overall effectiveness as satisfactory and inspectors agree. This is a happy school which is led well by the headteacher who, with his senior leaders, has very quickly identified strengths and areas for improvement. Parents speak in glowing terms of his impact since joining the school in September 2008, not least in improving communication with parents. Some aspects of the school's work are good. These include the high standards attained in science; current arrangements for safeguarding pupils; and the way pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to staying safe, being healthy, in their behaviour, and in their moral and social development. Inspectors agree with the school that it is most effective in its work to develop pupils personally and socially. Inspectors also agree that there are areas to improve further. These include standards of writing which, despite being an area for improvement at the last inspection, are still too low; aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage; the need to increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better; raising the profile of governors in the school community, and enabling the school to meet its duty to promote community cohesion.

Progress in securing success in the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection has been mixed. The greatest success has been in ensuring standards in mathematics have improved. In addition, because of recent actions, communication with parents has improved and they are now more involved in their child's learning through, for example, attending reading sessions with their children in the Reception classes and various workshops elsewhere in the school. Progress in other areas, over time and, despite recent good improvements, has been patchy and sometimes too slow. This is why inspectors have judged capacity for sustained improvement to be satisfactory, rather than good. Nonetheless, as parents told inspectors, there is an air of confidence throughout the school, to which all staff have responded.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing throughout the school by:
 - providing more opportunity for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects
 - developing a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and that skills practised are transferred into work in other subjects.

- Build on recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - appointing a designated leader for this area
 - quickly improving opportunities for outdoor learning.
- Strengthen governance by:
 - raising the profile of governors in the school community
 - governors supporting the school to meet its duty to promote community cohesion.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
 - enabling the good pace of learning evident in some classes to become a common feature throughout the school
 - making sure that work is always well matched to pupils' needs
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to participate in their learning
 - helping teachers to make better use of their accurate assessments to plan future lessons.

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.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

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The school is correct in its view that its best work is developing pupils personally and socially. During the inspection pupils demonstrated this well. They were polite, courteous and articulate. They care for and listen to each other and behave well. In particular, they showed good understanding of how to keep safe and be healthy. They happily participate in a range of clubs and activities and have appreciated having an input into healthier lunches, the development of bike sheds and securing more playground equipment. They enjoy school and this is confirmed by parental questionnaires. Nonetheless, despite this enjoyment, attendance is not as high as it was at the time of the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. Their contribution to the community is satisfactory. While there are aspects in school which are stronger, for example, in the influence of the school and Eco councils, and pupils' support for one another, it is less strong when the wider community beyond school is considered. Pupils' very strong moral and social attributes make their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development good.

Pupils' attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is, over time, broadly average and represents generally satisfactory progress, given pupils starting points. There is a mixed picture on attainment; in particular, pupils attain high standards in science by the end of Key Stage 2. This is because they are provided with opportunities for investigative work which extends their thinking and understanding. Standards in mathematics have improved, and were above average at the end of both key stages in 2008. Writing, however, remains a weakness and presents again a mixed picture across the school. In 2008, in Key Stage 1, writing standards were above average; at the end of Key Stage 2, they were low. Pupils' current work indicates standards are below average still, despite numerous efforts and initiatives to improve. It is a weakness because pupils are not allowed sufficient opportunities to put their writing skills into practice. In addition, there is no consistency in the way handwriting is

taught. Although it is neat in handwriting lessons, pupils do not transfer this into other areas of learning. These factors mean, in turn, that the development of skills that contribute to their future economic well-being is satisfactory rather than good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 3 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 2 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 3 |
| Pupils' attendance | 3 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 3 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 2 |

The quality of the school's work

The quality of the school's work is satisfactory in all areas. There is good teaching in the school, particularly at the end of each key stage. Where teaching is good or better, pupils' progress is good or better. However, there is too much that is only satisfactory, and this does not drive learning forward at a brisk enough pace. In these lessons, pupils spend too much time sitting and listening, and work is not always well matched to their needs. This is because the accurate assessments adults make are not used well or often enough to plan future lessons. The result is that, overall, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress, despite relationships being good. Where teaching is good or better, there is a real sense of urgency about learning from both pupils and adults. This was shown during the inspection in sharp questioning and good, appropriate levels of challenge in activities for different groups of pupils. Adult expectations of what pupils should achieve in quality and quantity are high. Pupils' work is marked regularly and comments are positive. Nonetheless, leaders are aware that more marking needs to help pupils take the steps they need to improve.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and promotes pupils' personal development well. It features a good range of additional activities, including opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument, for example, the violin in Year 4, a modern foreign language, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The residential visits are greatly valued. These activities successfully promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and their well-being. The curriculum is judged to be satisfactory rather than good, because the development of key skills such as writing

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

is at an early stage. In addition, information and communication technology is provided for satisfactorily.

The school provides a warm and caring environment. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this leads to these pupils making satisfactory progress. A number of parents commented on recent improvements in this area. While provision for gifted and talented pupils is in its very early stages of development, good support is provided for vulnerable pupils in general.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| High quality teaching and purposeful learning | 3 |
| Effective assessment | 3 |
| An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations | 3 |
| Support, guidance and care | 3 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's good, strong leadership is key. Parents, staff and pupils are very positive about his impact on the school. There is a shared understanding of where strengths lie and improvements are needed. The result is that some very important decisions and actions have been made since September 2008, not least in engaging with parents through more regular communications and the appointment of subject leaders to support development in curriculum areas. Nonetheless, the impact of many actions has not yet been measured nor have they resulted in better than satisfactory outcomes for pupils. As a result, many of the aspects of leadership and management over time, including how well the school promotes equality of opportunity, are judged to be satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory, although a significant minority of parents, in a questionnaire organised by the school in the Autumn, did not know of their role or how to contact them. A small number of parents in this inspection expressed similar feelings. In addition, the school is not meeting its duty to promote community cohesion as it has not drawn together or evaluated the aspects of its work that could contribute to this. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils, however, are, at the time of the inspection, of good quality.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| Communicating ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination | 3 |
| Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective | 2 |
| Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met | 3 |
| Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and | 3 |

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| well-being | |
| Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services | 3 |
| Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion | 4 |
| Deploying resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception from a wide range of pre-school providers and are helped to settle into school life at Norwood quickly and effectively. They enjoy the range of activities on offer, despite having to sit on the carpet for long periods of time. Sessions cover the main areas of learning, although planning for outdoor work is weak. Outdoor provision is inadequate. In part, this is through no fault of the school. Nonetheless, planned improvements to this area are proceeding too slowly. The Early Years Foundation Stage is currently formed from two Reception classes. Adults come together to plan at the beginning of a week and to evaluate at its end, but there is limited consistency between the two classes. This is because there is no overall leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, outcomes for children in their learning are satisfactory, and good in their personal development. There have also been important developments such as a greater involvement of parents at this early stage of their child's schooling.

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| How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 3 |
| What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 3 |
| How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 3 |
| Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Owing to a technical problem, the school was unable to distribute questionnaires to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. Instead, parents were provided with an opportunity to complete questionnaires confidentially as they dropped their children off at the beginning of the second day or return them at the end of the day. 103 questionnaires were returned altogether. In addition, inspectors spoke with groups of parents on both days.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school with extensive appreciation for the headteacher's contribution. A few parents reported that the school mostly, rather than always, dealt effectively with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour of pupils to be good.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Achievement: | an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |



February 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Norwood Primary School, Southport, PR9 7DU

I am writing to you to thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school recently. As you know, schools usually get a bit of notice that the inspectors are coming. With your school we just turned up! This was because we are trialling a new inspection approach nationally, and the no notice aspect is one part of that work. We were all impressed with how you and the adults responded so well to our visit.

We have judged that Norwood provides you with a satisfactory education. We could see that you attain high standards in science and the work in your books show that you enjoy the investigations. We were also pleased to see the improvements made in mathematics since the previous inspection. We are concerned, as we know Mr Dumbell and the school is, about the standards of writing in the school and we have asked that improvements be made in this area. We have also asked that the good teaching we saw in some lessons is a more regular feature and that you become more involved in the lessons. Sometimes, you are sitting for too long, rather than doing things. In addition, we have asked your school leaders to improve the outdoor area for the Reception class children and to make sure someone is in overall charge of the two classes. Also, because quite a few parents didn't know enough about what the governors do, we have asked that they make this better known. Finally, we have asked that the school draws together all the information it has about communities working together to help you understand this better.

As well as telling you about things that need some improvement, I want to tell you about the good things about your school. We were impressed by your good behaviour. You were polite and courteous not just to us but to other adults and each other. This was good to see. You also have a good understanding of how to be healthy and stay safe. These are important for both now and as you grow older. All these positive features, including your work with the school and Eco councils, when put together, show the school has been successful in promoting your personal and social development well.

Virtually everyone we spoke to was very positive about the work of Mr Dumbell. We know you will want to work with him and all other adults in the school to bring success to Norwood Primary School. We wish you well on your journey!

Best wishes

Mark Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

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