

Penketh South Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111198
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	325310
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	195
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Messenger
Headteacher	Mrs A Grace
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Finlay Avenue Penketh Warrington Cheshire WA5 2PN

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area of social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is much lower than usual. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a few have Asian or Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has experienced an unsettled period recently with a lack of continuity in leadership, management and staffing. A new headteacher took up post at the start of this academic year. The school holds the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that has some good features, including the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils' personal development. Under the determined and visionary leadership of the new headteacher, there have been good improvements in provision and learning. Parents have confidence in the school and praise, 'the caring, family atmosphere', and, 'fabulous communication which keeps all parents well informed of events, changes and general issues'. Good links with outside agencies, local schools and churches provide many benefits for pupils' learning.

Progress overall is satisfactory. Standards are beginning to rise and are just above the national average. Children make a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes, but then progress is variable across Years 1 to 6. There are some pockets of good progress, especially in Years 2 and 6. Key Stage 2 pupils are catching up on shortfalls in their previous learning. However, progress is not, at this time, consistent enough to raise achievement further, especially for the more able pupils and in mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 2 and 6 and for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of good lessons, however, is not high enough for the school to meet its own targets for improving achievement. Assessment and planning have been improved to move learning on at a faster pace. However, the element of challenge in lessons is not always sufficient to ensure that pupils, especially the more able, meet their potential. The curriculum is satisfactory and enhanced through some interesting visits and clubs. A strong emphasis on personal, social and health education enables pupils to make informed choices about their lifestyles and they learn to deal with social and moral issues effectively.

Personal development is good and behaviour excellent. Adults provide a secure environment and pupils say they enjoy learning. They make a good contribution to the school community. For example, the pupil council ensures that pupils' views are known, and play leaders help make playtimes run smoothly. Such experience and responsibility prepares pupils soundly for life in the wider world.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with good leadership demonstrated by the new headteacher. A thorough appraisal of teaching, learning and management by the leadership team has been carried out. It has enabled the school to identify and act upon the weaknesses that led to the recent decline in achievement. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet effective enough to ensure that all improvements are implemented consistently across all classes. Parents, governors and staff say that the headteacher has injected a new direction and enthusiasm into the school. Working as an increasingly cohesive team, the staff have taken good advantage of the expert support offered by the local authority in helping to improve standards. Pockets of good progress are emerging in Key Stage 2 and the extension of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school has been successful. Staff are eager to move on and there is good capacity for the school to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teaching, learning, management and leadership in the Nursery and Reception classes are good. Parents praise the provision and comment, 'The Foundation Stage unit provides a supportive

and challenging environment'. Children's individual 'learning journey' files and the class learning records ensure parents are well informed about their children's education. The levels of children's skills on entry to the Nursery vary widely. They are broadly in line with that expected for three-year-olds but around 25% have difficulties with speech and language and personal skills. Progress is assessed regularly and tasks are planned very effectively to build on children's developing knowledge and interests. As a result, they make good progress overall and excellent progress in early reading and writing. Staff are working hard to boost children's creative development which is relatively weaker. Those leaving the Reception year exceed the attainment expected for their age, especially in early reading, writing and mathematical work.

Lessons include opportunities for independent exploration and for children to follow their own interests. Staff make good use of the imaginatively designed outdoor area to promote learning. For example, children plant vegetables, explore bugs and display their colourful butterfly models. Good quality care and support for children's well-being ensure that personal development is good and behaviour is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement further, especially for the more able pupils and in mathematics.
- Improve the proportion of good teaching, especially the challenge for more able pupils.
- Inject more rigour into the monitoring of teaching to ensure that improvements are consistently implemented.

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 are just above average by the time pupils leave school and achievement is satisfactory. Some pockets of good progress are emerging but it is too early to see the full impact on test results. When pupils enter Year 1, their attainment is above that expected. The teacher assessments for Year 2 are clearer this year, showing standards that are above average overall. However, those in reading and writing are stronger than in mathematics. Standards for Year 6 pupils are also improving. Some underachievement of pupils in the past resulting from poor quality teaching has been addressed. Scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and analysis of school records show that boys and girls are making at least satisfactory progress, with good progress in Years 2 and 6. The school recognises that progress could be better, especially for the more able and in mathematics.

Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and make good progress towards their targets because they have good support in lessons and because group work is tailored to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Relationships are good, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is satisfactory and developing. This area is a current focus for school improvement.

Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel secure. They are well informed about the importance of a good diet, staying fit and keeping themselves and others safe from harm. Members of the school council represent their peers well and offer useful suggestions. For example, they organise charity fundraising days. A range of enterprise opportunities, like the recent engineering project, helps provide a taste of the world of work and introduction to secondary education. Pupils carry out a range of tasks diligently such as administrative duties at lunchtime, making a good contribution to the school community. A good awareness of the wider community is demonstrated through charity fundraising, entertaining residents in the nearby nursing home and caring for the environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, there are occasions when more able pupils are not stretched enough. Experienced teaching assistants provide good, targeted support, both in class and through a range of special groups that they lead.

Many improvements have been made in classroom practice but not all are consistently applied. For example, marking and the advice given to help pupils improve varies in quality. These are generally better in writing than mathematics. In some whole-class sessions, pupils are actively engaged in learning through discussions or through short, practical activities. In Year 6, for example, pupils debated a topical issue before writing. In some lessons, however, pupils sit listening to the teacher for too long. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own work which helps them to become independent learners but this good practice is not seen in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including those in the mixed-age classes. It includes some good enhancements for learning. For example, pupils take good advantage of the interesting range of clubs and said they enjoyed expert coaching in activities such as judo and fencing. Visiting musicians and artists fire pupils' enthusiasm and imagination and an interesting range of visits, including residential, helps to broaden pupils' experiences.

Teachers have made a start in linking subjects together. For example, a super-science day integrated work in mathematics, writing, problem solving and ICT. The school recognises the need to develop this successful themed approach further to consolidate learning and improve achievement. Special groups are successful in boosting progress in English and mathematics and in supporting pupils who need extra help with their learning. Lessons provided through the local schools' network promote the development of pupils with particular gifts and talents. The school is now working on a more challenging strand of planning for these pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care and welfare provided for pupils are good. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are well established and meet requirements. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know there is always an adult to whom they can turn. Parents are particularly appreciative of the care provided. A typical comment is, 'Any concerns are always investigated and results reported back to us'. A good range of rewards are valued by pupils and motivate them very effectively. Good procedures are in place to ease their transfer to the next phase of education.

There is satisfactory guidance for pupils to support their academic progress. Targets for learning provide advice and long-term learning goals. These are well used in Years 2 and 6 where reminders are kept in books for easy reference and referred to during lessons. This good practice is not consistent across all year groups. As a result, many pupils do not know about, or recall, the advice given so it has a limited impact on learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher provides good leadership and has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and areas for development. She has generated a shared vision of excellence among staff who are well motivated. Senior managers and governors are fully committed to raising achievement and standards further and some good progress is now evident. Measures to improve progress are beginning to have some impact, especially for the older pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 but they are not equally effective across all classes. Leadership and management roles have developed well with managers now carrying out some checking of provision and learning. However, this is not effective enough to ensure that school policy, for example in marking, is being routinely implemented. The new leadership teams have made a good impact on school assessment, the monitoring of pupils' progress, the setting of learning goals and planning. They check on the effectiveness of policy and practice for equal opportunities and know that there is more to do for gifted and talented pupils.

The governors are effective and bring a good level of experience and expertise to the school. They ask searching questions and are not afraid to make difficult decisions. They are now developing their monitoring role further, especially through visits to school. Community cohesion is satisfactory and this area is identified as a focus for further development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	3

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

Thank you very much for the warm, cheerful welcome and for all the help you gave my colleague and me when we came to visit your school. We had an interesting time in your company and would like to tell you what we found out.

Penketh South Primary provides you with a satisfactory education and has some good features. Your behaviour is excellent; you get on well together and take good care of each other. Well done! You are a credit to your families and your school. Your headteacher told us that you are a pleasure to teach and we think that you fully deserve the compliment.

You told us that the school is a safe and happy place and is free from bullying. This is good to know. Your council members ensure that all your views and opinions are known. I think your working party did well to win the competition so your playground could be developed. I think you do an excellent job in raising money for charities which shows that you care about those who are less fortunate in the world.

Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are happy with the school and especially pleased with the changes made recently and the care that your headteacher and staff take to make sure you are happy.

Those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2 you sometimes make good progress but it varies. Your reading and writing are improving but we have asked the school to help you do better in your mathematics. I have also asked the teachers to check that your lessons are the best they can be and that the work set for you is really stretching. I'm sure you will enjoy the extra challenges.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had throughout the two days and for letting us know your views so clearly. Please accept my best wishes for the future.