

# Belle Vale Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104519
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	336325
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barry Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs N Blackburne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Potter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Besford Road Liverpool Merseyside L25 2QF
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<b>Email address</b>	bellevale-ao@bellevale.liverpool.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils, the School Improvement Partner and a local authority representative. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation for safeguarding pupils and records showing the progress made by pupils. They also scrutinised 17 questionnaires returned by parents and questionnaires which had been completed voluntarily by pupils.

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

- how effective the school is in raising standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 and writing throughout the school
- how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more able pupils make progress
- how effectively the school promotes good attendance and behaviour
- how well the school promotes community cohesion
- how well children progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

The vast majority of the pupils who attend this school are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is almost treble the national average. The school was originally a two-form entry but has experienced falling rolls for several years. During this time, the school has reduced staff and reorganised classes into mixed-age groupings when necessary. The position has now stabilised and Belle Vale is now an average-sized one-form entry school. There are no mixed-age classes. The school has Healthy School status, Basic Skills Charter Mark and Activemark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

Belle Vale is a satisfactory school. The headteacher and governors have managed the fall in the number of pupils on roll without having to declare redundancies in staffing and without incurring a deficit budget. The school is now able to focus more of its efforts on raising standards and achievement.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is improving, and rapidly in English, but remains low overall. Progress through Years 1 to 6 has been uneven between year groups, subjects and ability groups. This disparity in performance is recognised and is being addressed but is not yet fully eradicated. In 2009 in the Year 6 national tests, pupils' results reflected outstanding progress in reading. Most pupils made satisfactory progress in writing but some made good progress, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is the culmination of intensive programmes for literacy within the school, whole-staff commitment and valued external local authority support. The school is continuing to be effective in its efforts to bring the quality of pupils' writing up to that of their reading.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Monitoring by the school and the local authority, confirmed by this inspection, shows that it is improving; the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Teachers manage their classes well and the pupils respond positively; they behave well and are keen to learn. The planning of work for low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and they make good progress. In some classes the few more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and their progress, although satisfactory, slows. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to help pupils understand key concepts. However, opportunities are missed by some teachers to use information and communication technology (ICT) to develop pupils' skills in other subjects.

The curriculum is stimulating and the pupils say that work is fun and interesting. A local authority review in March 2009 revealed some shortcomings in the curriculum for mathematics. For example, aspects such as interpreting data and investigative work were under represented. A scrutiny of pupils' books and observations of lessons reveal that teachers are now providing a more balanced curriculum for mathematics. Until last year, additional support was targeted exclusively at pupils with low literacy and communication skills generally. It is now being also rightly targeted at raising standards in mathematics and for more able pupils generally. However, these measures have not yet led to a rapid acceleration of rates of progress in mathematics, particularly for more able girls. The school's monitoring and observations by inspectors reveal that a minority of pupils are not attaining the standards they should in mathematics. Monitoring by the school is good generally and, for example, the monitoring of teachers' planning is very

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thorough and constructive. However, there is insufficient focus on the progress made by pupils in the lesson observations carried out by school leaders.

The senior leadership team has been strengthened. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved provision and outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The quality of care is high and consequently pupils feel safe. The school has very robust procedures for improving attendance. It does not always receive full cooperation on this from a few parents and attendance is well below average. Attainment is rising rapidly and there are improvements in the quality of teaching. The school has received substantial support for improving pupils' achievement, and latterly for management. Hence, despite some aspects of capacity being good, the level of external support means that capacity to improve further is satisfactory rather than good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 from satisfactory to at least good by:
  - ensuring that work is matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for the more able
  - providing guidance to pupils on how they might improve their work further
  - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to develop skills in other subjects
  - strengthening the focus on pupils' progress when monitoring the quality of teaching.
- Improve standards in mathematics by:
  - accelerating the progress of the more able pupils, particularly girls
  - ensuring that each teacher provides a balanced curriculum, giving due attention to each aspect of mathematics.
- Work with parents to improve levels of attendance.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

In 2009, results in the English national tests improved spectacularly. Over 90% of pupils attained the expected Level 4 and all made the expected two levels progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. In national mathematics tests, too few pupils gain the highest level at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Standards are rising in mathematics and science, although more slowly than in English. In a Year 6 mathematics class pupils showed good understanding in formulating word problems and progress in this lesson was good. There are no underachieving groups. However, the extent of progress made ranges from good for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to satisfactory for the more able pupils. Most pupils enjoy their work. All work hard in class

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and are keen to do well. They all participate keenly in whole-class discussions. Relationships in the school are good between pupils and between adults and pupils. Behaviour in class and around the school is good, although a minority of pupils say that a few boys are too boisterous in the junior playground at lunchtime. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their appreciation and awareness of different cultures is less developed. They have a good understanding of healthy-living issues. This is demonstrated by the awards of Healthy Schools status and Activemark. The school has the Basic Skills Charter Mark but the pupils' low attendance rates, although improving, means that their economic well-being is only satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching is improving and there are both satisfactory and good lessons. During the inspection no inadequate lessons were seen. Teachers share learning objectives with the pupils so that they know what they are to learn. Lessons are interesting for pupils. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on time, the teacher made effective links between geography and mathematics. A map of the world was displayed

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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on the whiteboard and the teacher moved the pointer across the map to investigate different time zones. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills; for example, opportunities to talk to a partner, to which pupils responded well. Some lessons lack sufficient pace. This is particularly the case where pupils are required to sit and listen for too long. The work planned for the more able pupils in some classes is not sufficiently challenging. Marking is good in most respects. It is done thoroughly and encouraging comments help to build pupils' self-esteem. However, there is insufficient guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work and aspire to a higher level.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities. For example, there are themed weeks for health and fitness and for creative work. During the inspection, pupils from Nursery to Year 2 were enthralled when preparing dance routines for a Christmas performance. Similarly, Year 5 and 6 pupils were enthusiastic about going to an exhibition on the slave trade as part of their project work. The use of cross-curricular themes is established in Key Stage 1 and developing well in Key Stage 2. The use of ICT is less well developed. The school now makes additional provision for the more able pupils but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this initiative.

This is a very caring school. The breakfast club is attended well and provides a good start to the day. The school works effectively with a wide range of partners to ensure that vulnerable pupils' needs are met. Consequently, they are able to play a full part in the life of the school. The school has very robust procedures to improve attendance. These have halved the percentage of persistent non-attenders in the last year. However, despite the school's best efforts, including a wide range of both sanctions and rewards, attendance remains low.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has emerged successfully from a difficult period. Recent appointments have strengthened the senior leadership team. Leaders at all levels are striving for improvement and articulate their ambitions well. This is demonstrated by the improvements in the teaching and that most outcomes for pupils are good or improving. The school has been helped by valued local authority support, including the formation of a Project Group to oversee the school's development. The school has used local authority support well to put itself on a sound financial footing. The governors have

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benefitted from participation in this group. They now feel better placed to challenge as well as support the school.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school is a harmonious community. The school's promotion of community cohesion is only satisfactory overall because links with the wider community are less well developed. There is an action plan to address this. This is an inclusive school, committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. It is successful in this aim regarding pupils' personal development but more work needs to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve to their potential.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication and social skills. The school provides a stimulating and welcoming environment to children. Provision is good and children make good progress as a result. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the gap between the children's skills and the nationally expected outcomes closes, but their skills are still below expected levels when they enter Year 1.

There is a good balance between adult-led and activities that children choose for themselves. Adults interact appropriately to help pupils develop further. There have been considerable improvements since the previous inspection. The curriculum has been improved greatly and there have been significant enhancements to both indoor and outdoor facilities. The school understandably sees the Early Years Foundation Stage as 'the jewel in its crown'. There is good management but the school is not complacent. It



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has identified parental involvement as an aspect that it would wish to improve further. This is being addressed in line with its action plan.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

There was a low response rate to the parents' questionnaire. In this small sample, most parents were supportive of the school. As one parent wrote, 'My child has always been very happy at Belle Vale School, and would like to thank the staff for all they have done for her.' A minority of parents expressed concern about behaviour at the school.

Inspectors disagree and found pupils' behaviour to be good. Other visitors to the school have commented that pupils are polite and courteous and behave well. The inspection has raised the issue of behaviour by a few boys at lunchtime when teachers are not present. The school is looking into this matter.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belle Vale Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	35	8	47	3	18	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	41	8	47	1	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	2	12	12	71	3	18	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	41	7	41	3	18	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	4	24	9	53	3	18	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	18	10	59	3	18	1	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	29	12	71	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	3	18	8	47	3	18	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	29	7	41	2	12	1	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	29	7	41	3	18	2	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	24	7	41	3	18	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	41	5	29	2	12	1	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	47	5	29	3	18	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



18 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belle Vale Community Primary School, Liverpool, L25 2QF

Thank you for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. You were extremely polite and courteous and we were impressed by the welcome that you gave to us. You told us that you feel safe and most of you enjoy going to school. Younger pupils were excited by the dance routines they were practising for their Christmas performance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 told us they were looking forward to going to the Slavery Exhibition at the museum as part of their project work. We judged that Belle Vale is satisfactory and improving school.

These are the things we liked most:

- children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start in the school
- you make really good progress with your reading
- teachers provide a wide range of interesting things for you to do
- adults look after you well and so you feel safe
- you are respectful and behave well
- the school is improving in many ways.

The school wants to become better and we have agreed some ways to help this happen. School leaders should ensure that:

- teaching is always at least good and that you are given work to make you think hard, particularly those for those of who learn more quickly
- teachers provide you with more opportunities to use computers to help you learn in other subjects
- teachers give you more guidance on how you can improve your work
- your progress is as good in mathematics as it is in English and that you have an interesting range of activities
- these things are happening by checking them out
- they work with your parents to improve your attendance.

For your part, you should always ask if you do not understand. Your teachers will be very pleased to help you. Also, please make sure that you attend regularly.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Barry Jones

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