

Lyme Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104776
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	336364
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
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 of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Knight
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Winstanley
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including data about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records. They reviewed information provided by parents in the 49 parental questionnaires that were returned.

- the standards reached by pupils and the progress they make
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in building on pupils' skills from year to year
- the impact of leadership and management on achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils
- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development.

Information about the school

This school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. A higher than average proportion of its pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities and an above average proportion is entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is higher than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very small proportion from other heritages. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The school moved into a new building during 2007 and work on the outdoor area was completed in the summer of 2008. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided in the Reception and Nursery classes. The school supplements part-time provision in the Nursery by offering additional sessions thereby enabling full-time attendance for a small number of children. The breakfast club and the after-school club provide extended care for pupils across the age range.

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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. From low starting points on entry to school, pupils go on to reach broadly average standards in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in English is lower, especially in writing. It has consistently been below average for a number of years and not enough improvement has been made in this subject since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. They work hard in lessons, behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Teaching quality and the curriculum are both satisfactory. The school is currently working to improve on this picture. It is aware that more needs to be done to raise the quality of all teaching to match the best practice in school and so improve the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in writing. The school is caring and inclusive and provides well for less able pupils, those who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; those pupils make good progress, as a result. More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and stretched and consequently they do not achieve as well as they might in lessons and in assessment at the end of the key stages.

The school has now settled into its new accommodation. The learning environment, in and out of doors, is bright and attractive and pupils benefit greatly from this. Extended provision in the Nursery, the breakfast club and after-school club all contribute well to pupils' welfare and personal development.

The school's leaders have established a systematic approach to tracking and reviewing the progress pupils make. This has had the best impact for less able pupils who are identified accurately and supported well. The school is less effective in addressing the underachievement of more able pupils. While the school's self-evaluation is accurate in most respects, it does not fully recognise the extent to which more able pupils may be underachieving, particularly in English. Consequently, the school's capacity for continuing to improve is currently satisfactory, rather than good. Monitoring and evaluation systems are in place but, while they have helped bring about an improving trend in standards in mathematics and science, they are not sufficiently rigorous to bring about desired improvements in the overall quality of teaching. Nor do they focus sharply enough on raising standards in writing. The Early Years Foundation Stage does not currently have a designated leader and this is slowing down the momentum of the drive to raise standards for the youngest children despite other significant improvements in provision that have been achieved. The poor attendance of a small minority of pupils is an ongoing issue for the school, despite its strenuous efforts to promote and encourage regular attendance.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing across the school by ensuring pupils have regular, structured opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills.
- Ensure the overall quality of teaching rises from satisfactory to good or better, with appropriate challenge for more able pupils, through the effective use of rigorous monitoring.
- Strengthen leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to support the drive for ongoing improvement, including developing the role of parents as partners in their children's learning and development.
- Improve attendance by implementing a range of strategies to promote good attendance.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills levels below the expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress across the school reaching standards that are broadly average in mathematics and science and below average in English by the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils doing well for their age at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is below average in all subjects. Attainment is higher in reading than in writing across the school. The school's tracking information shows that pupils progress more rapidly in mathematics than in English in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attained well at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008, as a result of the targeted support given to those with additional needs in this inclusive school. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons and show good concentration skills. They work well with a partner or in groups and this is helping them to become more confident learners. In most lessons they are alert and responsive and show enthusiasm and interest in learning. In some lessons, where insufficient challenge is provided for them, more able pupils do not attain as well as they might. Pupils show a good understanding of issues around healthy living and personal safety. They take responsibility as school councillors and older pupils enjoy acting as activity leaders at playtimes. Pupils and parents agree that school is a place of safety, although a small minority described some instances of aggressive behaviour between pupils at playtimes; no examples of this were seen during the inspection. Despite the school's efforts to promote good attendance, a small number of families have not been able to ensure that their children attend regularly and attendance figures are below national targets.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is uneven with some good and some satisfactory lessons seen. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are planned well to take the range of pupils' needs into account, the pace of learning is brisk and teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' thinking. Information and communication technology (ICT) is often used effectively to add interest to lessons. Teachers assess pupils' learning in lessons and use their findings to help them plan the next steps. Teaching assistants make a useful contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who have additional needs; a good range of support strategies and interventions is in use and this is helping those pupils to make progress. More able pupils find learning tasks too easy in some lessons, however, and then the pace of learning is too slow. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has been revised in recent times to make it more interesting and relevant for pupils. This is a positive development but it has not yet had sufficient impact on pupils' achievement in writing. The curriculum is enriched by good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports and the arts and by modern foreign language provision in Key Stage 2. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and extended care provided at the start and end of each day is managed well and enhances the welfare of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Regular progress reviews have been introduced since the last inspection. This has enabled staff to identify and support pupils who are struggling or who are low achievers. As a result, less able pupils' rate of progress is improving. There has not yet been a similar impact on the attainment of pupils in the middle and higher ability groups. This is because the school has not been sufficiently strategic in identifying and supporting pupils who may be underachieving. Recent measures introduced to raise the overall quality of teaching from satisfactory to good are starting to have a positive impact. Monitoring procedures are in place but are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure continuing improvement. The supportive governing body is increasing its capacity to hold the school to account but is not actively involved in assuring the quality of provision. Most parents expressed positive views of the school, reflecting the good relationships that prevail between parents and staff. The school regularly canvasses parental views on important issues and regular newsletters aid communications. The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and child protection. Its inclusive ethos supports equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement. The school contributes to community cohesion through its links with local churches and other organisations, through community use of its playing field and through its partnerships with the high school and with a range of agencies that support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

<p>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</p>	
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry to Nursery are often well below expectations for the age group. They make satisfactory progress towards the Early Learning Goals during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage but, by the end of the Reception Year, a small proportion still has not reached expected levels. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with a good balance of activities initiated by the children themselves and those led and directed by adults. Staff provide a range of activities that are interesting and fun for the children and present an appropriate level of challenge. Relationships are caring and warm and, consequently, children are happy and secure in the setting. Provision to ensure their welfare meets requirements. Assessment is based on careful observations of the children in their activities and is used effectively to plan for their individual learning needs. Although relationships with parents are positive, parents are not yet involved as partners in their children's learning and assessment. The learning environment is bright and welcoming and the outdoor area has been developed well to support active learning through play. There is currently no designated leader in the setting; this means that, although the team has identified some priorities, responsibility for driving improvement forward has not been clearly identified. Links with external agencies help to support the progress of children with additional learning or social needs. A small number of children benefit from taking up the school's offer of full-time places in the Nursery class and this is helping them to develop improved confidence and independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and a very small number met with an inspection team member during the inspection. A very large majority of those who responded said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the school's satisfactory overall effectiveness. A small number of parents were critical of the school's management of unacceptable behaviour: the inspection

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team did not agree with them, finding that pupils' behaviour is good and is managed well by the staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lyme 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	57	36	36	6	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	56	40	40	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	41	55	56	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	45	50	50	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	52	46	46	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	40	51	51	9	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	42	58	58	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)	33	33	65	65	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	43	53	53	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	33	48	48	9	9	9	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	38	52	53	7	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	39	39	56	56	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	45	49	49	5	5	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Inspection of Lyme Community Primary School, Lyme Street, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 9HD

Thank you for making the inspection team 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. These are some of the things we found about Lyme.

- Lyme is a happy school and you are well-behaved and polite young people. You work hard in your lessons and get on well with each other and with the adults in school.
- The school gives you a satisfactory standard of education.
- Your new school building provides you with a bright and attractive environment for learning and we know that you are very pleased with it, especially the well-equipped play areas.
- You are making satisfactory progress in your learning. The standards you reach in mathematics and science are similar to average standards in most schools. Standards in English, particularly in writing, are lower than in many other schools. Your teachers are working hard to help to raise your attainment in this subject.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gets your education off to a satisfactory start. There is still work to be done to make Lyme the best school it can possibly be. I have asked the governors, headteacher and the staff to continue the drive to raise standards and achievement by:
 - making sure you have plenty of opportunities to practise and improve your writing skills in your topic work
 - making sure that there is always enough challenge for more able pupils
 - strengthening the leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to help make it even better
 - working with those of you who don't come to school regularly to help you improve your attendance.

You can help with all of this by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future

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