

Great Meols Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105033
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336406
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2010
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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Beryl Roberts
Headteacher	Mrs Pip Sheddon
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 18 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including policies on safeguarding, the school development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of pupils' progress, including individual education plans for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors spent approximately 60% of their time inspecting pupils' learning. Staff and pupils completed questionnaires and 124 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also read and analysed.

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

- standards of work in current classes and the progress pupils are making
- improvements since the last inspection
- how parents and pupils view the work of the school
- all aspects of safeguarding and provision to secure the welfare of pupils.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average size primary school. Its pupils come from a wider area than the immediate locality. Almost all pupils are White British. No pupil is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational need. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes. A privately run pre-school Nursery operates in the school and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has the Investors in People and Healthy School's Awards, the Activemark and Basic Skills Award. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher was in an acting role for the year and was later appointed to the headship of the school subsequently, a new deputy headteacher was appointed.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides an outstanding education for pupils. Standards in English, mathematics and science are high and throughout the school pupils make good and at times outstanding progress. Their overall achievement in both academic and personal development is excellent. These exceptional outcomes are due to a number of factors: good quality teaching; excellent care, guidance and support; pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning; the rich and varied curriculum; and the valuable support parents give to their children's education.

Teaching is well planned and lessons have a brisk pace. Pupils gain a good understanding of what the objectives of a lesson are and what they need to do to improve their work. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. The curriculum is exceptionally well planned with special events, visits and visitors to enrich the lives of pupils. All staff provide excellent care so that pupils feel safe in school and know how to look after themselves and one another. They gain an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle.

Since the last inspection the overall effectiveness of the school has improved. This is thanks to the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff. The leadership team is rigorous in evaluating accurately how well the school is doing and taking steps to address any shortcomings found. They drive forward and secure improvement well through a detailed school improvement plan. For example, the standards of pupils' writing have been improved considerably. Supported by a strong governing body, the leadership team has good capacity to maintain high performance and further improve provision. The school has good strategies in place to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship and their role in the local and wider community. It has yet to make a full review of pupils' needs and understanding, however, in order to create an action plan to promote community cohesion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review pupils' needs and draw up an action plan to promote the local and wider aspects of community cohesion and pupils' better understanding of citizenship.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Across the age range, learning is good in lessons because pupils concentrate and listen very well and join in discussions fully. They collaborate with one another, sharing ideas readily with their 'talking partner'. They are confident in explaining what they are doing

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in subjects, such as mathematics, and will seek help when necessary. Teachers provide pupils with clear guidance in exercise books on how they should structure their writing and improve the way they show their working out in mathematics. As a result, pupils know how to improve their work. Each year the majority of pupils in Year 6 achieve above the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils take with them to secondary school the knowledge and skills to do well in the future and a real enthusiasm for learning. Attendance is consistently above average and punctuality is good. The pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and secure is very well developed. A large number take part in the county's Civil Award scheme that promotes good citizenship and service to others. Pupils make healthy choices from the varied menus at lunchtimes, bring fruit to school for snacks and take part in the wide variety of physical activities available before- and after-school and during lunchtimes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching provides pupils with good challenge and is well planned. Interactive

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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whiteboards are used particularly effectively to stimulate pupils' interest. Teachers know their pupils well and so pitch their questions accurately to challenge them and make them think. A strong feature of the best teaching is the use of assessment to plan and mark work and to encourage pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. In a few lessons, this is not so evident and as a result, pupils' learning is satisfactory rather than good. It is for this reason the overall quality of teaching and of pupils' learning is good rather than outstanding. Senior staff are aware of this relative shortcoming and are taking effective steps to ensure assessment is used consistently well throughout all classes. The high quality curriculum evident at the last inspection has been maintained. This is true not only of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but also of the many themed events. These include international weeks, sporting themes and exhibitions, imaginatively modelled, for instance, on the Great Exhibition of the 19th Century. Activities outside lessons are excellent and frequently linked to the Children's University, offering awards, certificates and medals. Promotion of pupils' talents and expertise is a particular feature and full encouragement is given to pupils and their parents to help pupils reach their potential. Highly effective provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils, maintained since the last inspection, is bolstered by good partnerships with outside agencies. These help the more vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve well. Very good arrangements for pupils to help them as they start school and move on to secondary school mean pupils gain confidence and feel secure.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Since appointment, the headteacher has built on the strengths of the school exceptionally well, acted effectively to address the issues from the last inspection and astutely delegated responsibility to ensure the professional development of middle leaders. Staff report they feel part of the outstanding drive to improve provision and are very motivated to contribute. Governors make a good contribution to school improvement and bring excellent expertise to their roles. They discharge their responsibilities well and challenge the senior leadership to account for its actions. Staff are highly committed to do the best for all pupils and the school is highly effective in providing equality of opportunity. The school adopts recommended good practice across all aspects of safeguarding, including the safe recruitment of staff, and systems are

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robust. With several strong international links and good local partnerships, the school's support for community cohesion is good. However, it has yet to formalise any action plan committing the school to this role.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with attainment that is broadly average. By the end of the year the great majority of children are working at or beyond the early learning goals expected for their age and are ready to transfer confidently into Year 1. They show a high level of independence, imagination and concentration. They behave very well and are confident in speech. They understand about staying safe and looking out for one another, evident when they use the large wheeled toys outside. Early skills of reading and writing develop very well. For example, a group composing a letter of sympathy to the nursery rhyme characters Jack and Jill, wrote very clearly and legibly in full sentences with good attention to spelling and punctuation. This good and often outstanding progress is the result of good provision. Children have opportunities to work and play indoors and outside. Resources are used effectively and teachers' planning is detailed and adapted imaginatively to follow the interests of the children. A particular strength is the outstanding system of assessment that both teachers and support staff use to monitor children's progress. Leadership and management by the key stage leader and the Early Years Foundation Stage staff are good. They take careful note of trends in performance. For example, they have acted promptly on a trend for boys not to choose to write. They have identified the need for improved resources outdoors to promote

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mathematical understanding. However, the use of the outside area is restricted in poor weather. Staff are aware of this aspect for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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

A very large majority of parents responded positively to the parents' questionnaires. Parents wrote of how the school encourages pupils to want to learn. Several parents commented on the supportive nature of the staff and how the headteacher provides good leadership. Many say their children are happy and very settled at the school. Inspectors agree with these positive views. It was evident that a significant minority of parents would like more information about how well their children are doing, what National Curriculum levels mean and how best they can support their children in their school work. The school has good systems of communication with parents and sends home information about the curriculum and guidance on homework. Successful workshops for parents on subjects, such as, mathematics have also been held. Nevertheless, the headteacher and senior staff acknowledge these suggestions by parents and have agreed to canvass their views further, with a view to providing even more information for parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Meols 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 387 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	50	56	47	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	56	51	43	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	22	84	70	10	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	30	72	60	9	8	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	43	36	68	57	7	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	35	65	54	12	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	42	61	51	7	6	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)	31	26	75	63	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	33	67	56	10	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	25	80	67	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	22	72	60	12	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	29	71	59	10	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	38	63	53	10	8	1	1

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.



1 February 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Great Meols Primary School, Wirral, CH47 7AP

It was a pleasure to inspect your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. On behalf of the inspection team I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with an outstanding education. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you work very hard. You behave exceptionally well and look after each other. You told us how much you enjoy all the many physical activities and clubs the teachers provide. You have learnt a great deal about how to stay safe and healthy and you take part in many events with other schools and in the community. We think the opportunities you have for trips out of school, events in school and residential trips are outstanding! Your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you all and make sure that you all feel safe and secure.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There is one improvement to make.

- For your headteacher and the senior staff to plan how to promote the school's role in the community.

Please continue to work hard. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Frank Carruthers

Lead Inspector

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