

Penketh Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111239
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	337648
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Langford
Headteacher	Mr Mark Hilton
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
School address	Coniston Avenue Penketh Warrington WA5 2QY
Telephone number	01925 723719
Fax number	01925 723719
Email address	Penketh_Primary_Head@warrington.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, policies, pupils' books, assessment information, pupil and staff questionnaires and 72 parental questionnaires.

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

- pupils' attainment, progress and achievement
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Information about the school

This is an average-size primary school in which the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, reflects the national average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award.

The on-site provision for childcare, 'Little Acorns and Penketh Community Primary After School Club' was inspected separately and will receive a separate inspection report.

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

This is an outstanding school. Pupils' personal welfare and development are at the heart of all the school does. As a result, pupils are exceptionally happy, safe and well cared for. They are unfailingly polite, welcoming and proud of their school. Their behaviour is exemplary at all times. Pupils work and play harmoniously in a school that is highly active and respected in the community it serves. Almost all parents value the school very highly. 'I'm so pleased with the school. My children love coming every day,' and, 'I cannot think of a better school for my children. They are happy, well cared for and making good progress,' are just two of the many comments praising the school. Strong leadership and management ensure that this is a school that never stands still. Leaders and managers analyse performance and gather opinions from a wide variety of stakeholders to make sure that they have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. The school also has a sharp focus on seeking ways to improve even further. For example, the refinement of systems to check on pupils' progress is leading to significantly rising standards and achievement. This testifies to the school's good capacity to improve even further.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. As they move up through the school they make good progress and achieve well to attain standards by the end of Key Stage 2 that are above average and rising. Pupils make good progress because teaching overall is good and stimulates their interest. The outstanding curriculum also plays a significant role in providing them with an excellent range of learning opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom. Most teaching is good or better. However, where teaching is satisfactory it is characterised by slower pace and a less clear focus on learning; this serves to dampen pupils' rates of learning. Most teaching is challenging and demands that children think for themselves and justify their answers. However, teaching is not consistent in making sure that what pupils are asked to do corresponds closely enough to the abilities and needs of differing groups. As a result, some of the tasks are too easy and some too difficult for some pupils in mixed ability classes.

The whole school pulls together strongly as a team in the quest for improvement and the maintenance of the highest standards of care and welfare for the pupils. This includes governors, who are exceptionally knowledgeable about the school. They hold the school rigorously to account and play a significant role in ensuring it meets its targets and sets its sights high.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by:
- making sure that teachers plan their lessons consistently well to incorporate tasks that are appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils
- improving the satisfactory teaching to at least good by careful monitoring and sharing the school's many examples of good and better practice to act as a model for effective teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. In nearly all lessons an atmosphere of calm application and a desire to succeed are apparent. It is pleasing to see how eagerly pupils enter classrooms and settle to their learning with a minimum of fuss and delay 'Teachers make learning fun', is the opinion of many pupils. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution, especially by supporting lower attaining pupils. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. For the last two years, the school has met its demanding targets. Inspection evidence shows that standards continue to rise.

Pupils' attendance levels are very high because pupils want to be in school and they understand the importance of good attendance if they are to learn effectively. Pupils work and play in a happy environment based on respect for others. They feel exceptionally safe in school and say that adults are quick to help them resolve any problems. Pupils show good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and even the youngest of them can explain what foods are good for them and why. The school offers an exceptionally wide range of sporting enrichment activities in which participation rates are very high. The school council is a very active body which represents pupils' views and brings about improvements to the school's facilities by providing playground equipment, for example. Pupils are pleased that the school council took an active part in recent interviews for the appointment of a deputy headteacher. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. They understand fully the difference between right and wrong and the importance of respect and understanding for those who are different. The recent links with a multiracial, inner-city school in Liverpool are causing a stir of excitement about extending pupils' understanding and first-hand experience of other cultures and life in a multi-ethnic society. Pupils' high levels of basic skills, allied to their outstanding levels of self-confidence and maturity, mean that the school prepares them exceptionally well for their future lives.

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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching enables pupils to learn effectively and achieve well. Most teaching is conducted at a good pace and with a clear sense of purpose. Relationships in classrooms are very strong: resulting in excellent behaviour and pupils who take their learning very seriously. The school's systems for checking on pupils' progress are very effective. As a result, teachers know how well pupils are doing and can quickly identify and tackle any underachievement. Attainment across the school is rising significantly. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the topics they follow in the outstanding curriculum. Their enthusiasm is heightened further by the frequent educational trips from and visitors to the school. Above all, the pupils speak in glowing terms about how much there is for them to do outside normal lessons. The range of sporting and artistic opportunities available is simply outstanding. It is little wonder that pupils are keen to try out new things for themselves and enjoy school when so much is offered to them. Care, guidance and support are the foundations on which the school is built. They ensure that pupils feel exceptionally safe in school. 'It's really like being part of a family', is the opinion of one older pupil. Pupils know that adults will help them if they have problems or need extra help with their work. Induction arrangements into the Early Years Foundation Stage are highly effective and ensure that children settle smoothly into school life. Effective links with high schools also ensure that older pupils feel confident about their move to secondary education. Arrangements for communicating with parents are thorough and designed to keep them well informed about their children's progress and the curriculum they are following.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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?

The headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders and managers, has a clear and ambitious vision for the school which has become part of the fabric of the everyday life of the school. The school promotes high levels of teamwork in pursuit of its realisation. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are strongly committed to promoting equality of opportunity and including all pupils regardless of background or ability. Leaders and managers are strongly committed and effective in tackling discrimination. This is seen in the school's effective planning and provision for the needs of individual pupils and the targeted support every pupil with an identified need receives. This commitment results in all groups of pupils making good progress and feeling valued and happy in school. Leadership and management at all levels reach out to the local community at every opportunity to make sure that pupils gain a strong sense of belonging and respect for others. The highlight is the November school bonfire celebration, which is an experience bringing the school and whole local community together. Attention to safeguarding is outstanding. All policies and procedures are in place. Statutory requirements are met. Adults receive regular training in child protection procedures and policies. The school has excellent procedures to ensure that parents and carers are kept informed about the progress their children make and the content of courses they are following. The effectiveness of leaders and managers in promoting community cohesion is good and improving. While the promotion of a harmonious school community and work in the local community are exceptionally strong, the promotion of understanding of life in a multicultural society is at an earlier stage of development.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

The outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage sets the scene for much of the pupils' success as they move up through the school. Good teaching ensures that the children make good progress in their learning so that they enter Key Stage 1 with good skill levels and good attitudes to learning. The curriculum is highly effective in providing children with a stimulating range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. There is a very good range of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. The Early Years Foundation Stage is especially successful in making sure that children develop in confidence and learn to work in cooperation with others. Children work and play in a stimulating environment in which resources are used outstandingly well to capture children's interest and excitement. Children are exceptionally well cared for. Their progress is monitored meticulously. Parents are kept regularly informed of their children's progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified very early and, where necessary, outside agencies are used effectively to provide support. The recent change to leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage has taken place seamlessly so that the highest standards of provision for children's care and personal development have been maintained.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned questionnaires were supportive of all aspects of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Penketh 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	69	39	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	61	49	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	53	42	71	56	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	41	74	58	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	70	55	56	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	50	60	47	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	56	55	43	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)	56	44	67	53	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	47	66	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	44	67	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	42	70	55	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	82	60	54	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	57	51	40	0	0	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.



Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet you. We enjoyed talking to some of you and what you told us helped us greatly in reaching our judgements.

You will be delighted to know that you go to an outstanding school which provides you with outstanding levels of care and support. You told us how much you enjoy school and how safe you feel. You have very positive attitudes to lessons because your teachers make learning fun. It is good to see that you all attend school regularly – well done! You behave very well at all times and get on exceptionally well with each other and the adults who work with you. It is very pleasing to see that your school is at the heart of the local community and how hard you all work to make sure the school is highly thought of in Penketh. I hope this year's community bonfire goes well!

In order to make your school even better, I have as asked your headteacher to do two things:

- make sure that what your teachers ask you to do in lessons is always matched closely to your needs and abilities
- make sure that all teaching is at least good.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure your school continues to be outstanding in the coming years.

I wish you the very best for the future.

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