

# Well Lane Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105050
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	336408
<b>Inspection dates</b>	09–10 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Shields

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>	177
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steve Blaylock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Mellin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Well Lane Tranmere Birkenhead CH42 5PF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons or part lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and representatives from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records and additional evidence of the support for vulnerable pupils. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. In addition, 45 parental questionnaires and a representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils were scrutinised. No staff questionnaires were returned.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress in all year groups, to determine whether it is improving quickly enough
- the quality of learning in all classes to establish whether teaching is sufficiently challenging in meeting the needs of all pupils, in particular, the more able
- the impact of revisions to the curriculum in increasing engagement and improving outcomes for pupils
- the rigour of tracking arrangements and the use of assessment information to promote learning and progress for all groups of pupils
- the quality of arrangements to monitor and secure improvements in pupils' attendance
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels to drive improvement.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. Eligibility for free school meals is more than four times the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and rising. A Nursery and a Reception class form the school's Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has gained the Healthy School status. Since the previous inspection there has been a high turnover in teaching staff and a new headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

**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**

**4**

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

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires special measures. This is because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Leadership and management at all levels, including governance, are ineffective. The senior leadership, together with subject leaders, work well as a team but their roles are not clearly established. Monitoring, evaluation and review procedures lack both rigour and any links to improvement planning. Priorities identified by the school are largely driven by a range of representatives from the local authority. The school has not tackled all the improvements required from the previous inspection, despite the widespread additional support it is receiving from the local authority. As a result of the weaknesses in leadership and management, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. They get a satisfactory start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The indoor learning areas aid the development of children's skills and knowledge in all aspects of the curriculum. In fine weather, the outdoor area is used continuously throughout the day, but the range of resources are limited and this holds back children's learning and progress if they choose to be outside.

As a result of the weaknesses in teaching, the use of assessment and in the curriculum, pupils do not make sufficient progress during their time at school and achievement for all groups is inadequate. By the end of Year 2 attainment is low and has been for the last five years. By the end of Year 6 attainment in English, mathematics and science is significantly below average, although it is rising steadily and has been for the previous three years. The improvement is because teaching and learning are strongest in Years 5 and 6. Nevertheless, throughout the school teaching is too variable and, despite isolated examples of outstanding practice, much teaching is not effective in fully engaging pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always sufficiently high. Assessment does not always make clear to pupils the progress made or the steps required to improve. The curriculum is organised into themes, but is not adapted to meet the needs and

abilities of pupils in Years 1 and 2. In all year groups there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their basic skills in a range of contexts.

All staff provide caring support for pupils and their families, of whom a significant proportion experience considerable difficulties in their lives. The school has a range of links with outside agencies and these are used well to promote pupils' emotional and social welfare. However, the school does not comply with current statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection. Attendance is well below average. Most pupils enjoy school, but a small minority say they get bored and do not learn much in their lessons. Behaviour is inadequate. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, in some lessons the behaviour of a small minority is not managed well enough, too much time is wasted dealing with low-level disruption and, on occasions, poor behaviour. This interrupts the learning and progress of other pupils.

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

- Build the school's capacity to work independently of external support by improving the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels and ensuring that:
  - monitoring and evaluation arrangements are rigorous, outcomes are clearly recorded and addressed and clear links made to the implementation of robust improvement planning
  - assessment arrangements are accurate and the system to monitor pupils' progress is robust so that any underachievement is quickly identified and tackled
  - the governing body regularly reviews and evaluates the school's provision and contributes effectively to helping set its strategic direction
  - safeguarding and child protection arrangements comply with current statutory requirements.
  
- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that:
  - more activities are provided to increase pupils' eagerness to write in all subjects
  - pupils have more opportunities to improve their speaking skills
  - the presentation of pupils' work is improved, in particular, their handwriting
  - there is a consistent approach to teaching mathematical calculation in all classes with regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in a range of contexts
  - pupils have regular opportunities to take part in practical science investigations and have more opportunities to discuss their tasks and record their work independently.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching to a consistently good or better standard by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons
  - assessment information is consistently used to match work precisely to pupils' needs and abilities, in particular, those of the more able

- all teachers use questioning that challenges pupils to think more deeply about their learning
  - the management of pupils' behaviour consistently matches the quality of the best practice
  - pupils are regularly involved in the assessment of their progress, and that marking indicates how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that:
- in Years 1 and 2 it meets the needs and abilities of all pupils
  - there are planned opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in a range of contexts
  - sufficient resources are available so that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can choose activities during learning outdoors whatever the weather.
- Improve attendance by ensuring that:
- arrangements to monitor attendance are rigorous and robust and steps are taken to encourage good attendance and reduce persistent absence.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4
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Standards are too low and pupils' achievement is inadequate. The vast majority of pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are below those typical for their age. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils make inadequate progress and by the end of Year 2, attainment is low. In Key Stage 2 progress is patchy. In Years 5 and 6 it is stronger because teaching is more effective. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science, although steadily rising, is significantly below average because pupils do not make up for the legacy of past underachievement quickly enough. In all year groups, far fewer pupils than average attain the higher levels because they are not always given sufficiently challenging work to enable them to reach their full potential.

In the best lessons, the pace is lively, activities are practical, matched to pupils' interests and new technology is used. Pupils' attention is captured, they become engrossed in learning, apply themselves to their tasks diligently and their progress speeds up. This is not always the case, however, and too many pupils fail to work effectively and tasks are often incomplete. This is because work is either too easy or too hard for them and they lose interest and give up. Many pupils lack the skills to work independently of an adult. Learning and progress are also less effective when low-level chatter and disruptions as well as occasional poor behaviour divert the teachers' attention. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress because, although the guidance they receive in lessons from teaching assistants is supportive, tasks are not closely enough matched to their needs.

Pupils enjoy tending the school allotment and helping with the redevelopment of the local park, but in school pupils have few responsibilities. There are no effective channels for pupils to express their opinions and bring about improvements and most pupils do not feel they have an effective voice in school. Inspectors agree. Pupils say

they feel safe and are confident there is an adult to turn to if required, but a significant minority do not feel that incidents of bullying are always dealt with effectively enough. Most pupils are friendly and generally have good relationships with adults. A third of pupils who returned the questionnaires did not feel that behaviour is good enough. A significant minority say their learning is disrupted because of the inappropriate behaviour of others, while many say behaviour is too boisterous at lunchtime because they do not have equipment to play with. Inspectors agree and judge that behaviour is inadequate. Attendance is well below average and for a small minority persistent absence is too high and shows no signs of improvement. Most pupils are not developing the skills to prepare them successfully for their future beyond school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</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>4</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?

In the best lessons, teachers have good expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure the presentation of pupils' work is neat and tidy. They make good use of interesting resources and new technology; this increases pupils' enjoyment of their activities. Questioning is effective and makes pupils think more deeply about their learning. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to share ideas about their tasks or to talk in pairs; this successfully promotes speaking and listening. These features, however, are not consistent in every class and too much teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory and fails to fully engage pupils. The pace of too many lessons is disrupted when teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour effectively enough. The accuracy with which teachers assess pupils' progress is too variable. Although there are examples of good practice, teachers' use of assessment information to adjust lesson planning is patchy. As a result, work is not tightly matched to the needs of individual pupils. In the best practice, marking is helpful and provides constructive comments to help pupils improve, but this is not so in all classes.

The curriculum has recently been revised but it is too early for amendments to impact on pupils learning and development. Pupils do not have enough opportunities

<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

to practise their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills and this limits the development of their basic skills. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 in particular is not modified to meet their abilities and needs. There are satisfactory arrangements for the personal, social and health education of pupils. The breadth of the visits and visitors to enrich learning is satisfactory, but the range of activities available beyond lessons is too limited and pupils, especially girls, indicate they would like a more varied choice.

The school provides good levels of pastoral care and support. Teachers know pupils well. There is good support for individuals and vulnerable groups, which has led to noticeable improvements in their self-esteem. Arrangements to help pupils move from year group to year group and then on to secondary school are good. The school does not take sufficiently rigorous steps to monitor and encourage regular attendance, although there has been some success with a few individuals, Safeguarding procedures do not meet requirements.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership has established a shared vision among staff to bring about improvement. However, responsibilities are not always clearly defined, and this dilutes the capacity of individuals to drive improvement. Management systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are insufficiently rigorous. New arrangements to track and assess pupils' progress, so that any underachievement can be quickly identified are not robust. The school is not using target-setting well enough to raise pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils' achievement and progress are held back. Although very supportive, the governing body does not hold the school to account by regularly checking the quality of provision and contributing to driving school improvement. As a result, it has too little impact on the work of the school. The local authority is providing extensive support in the school, for example, best practice to secure improvements in teaching is being shared, but is yet to impact on the quality of education for all pupils.

Satisfactory arrangements are in place to promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination. Relationships with most parents are satisfactory and they are involved in their children's learning, well-being and in the life of the school. There is a suitable flow of information and their views are regularly, although informally, sought. The role of the home/school link officer is underdeveloped. Although some success has been achieved with individual families, a small minority does not engage with the school. Community cohesion has strengths in pupils' involvement in the local community. However, the school does not evaluate or have a clear plan to improve its contribution to the wider and global community. The effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection procedures is inadequate. This is because record keeping and



some referral procedures do not fulfil current statutory requirements. Although there is a suitable number of staff and adequate resources, the school provides inadequate value for money because outcomes for pupils are inadequate.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<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>4</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>3</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>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. As a result of careful analysis, there is an accurate view of what to do next to develop the phase further. Recently, actions are being successfully implemented to bring about improvement. Children enjoy learning and have trusting relationships with adults. Satisfactory welfare procedures are in place and children are kept safe. Planned activities have a suitable balance between those that children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. In the outdoor area the range of resources is limited. Access is not continuously available when the weather is wet and so children cannot choose for themselves if they want to learn outside. As a result, this holds back children's independent learning and progress. As a result of satisfactory teaching, children make satisfactory progress. By the time they enter Year 1, a few children are working within the expected levels for their age, but the vast majority are below. Observation and assessment are satisfactory. Information is used to plan activities; however, these are not sufficiently tailored to children's needs and abilities, especially those of the more able. Satisfactory relationships have been fostered with parents, who say that they feel welcome in the school.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from 45 parents which represents around 20% of the total. Analysis of responses indicates that in the main parents are happy with their children's experience at school and their children enjoy school. Most parents felt the school encouraged their children to live healthy lifestyles; inspectors endorse this view. The majority indicated that they thought teaching is good, their children are making enough progress and the school keeps their children safe. Inspectors do not agree and judge that teaching could be better and pupils should make more progress. Inspectors also judge that safeguarding and child protection arrangements do not meet current statutory requirements. A few parents expressed concerns about how well the school meets their children's particular needs, the school arrangements to deal with unacceptable behaviour and the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school. Inspectors endorse these views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Well Lane 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 inspector received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	53	18	40	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	26	58	16	36	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	58	16	36	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	62	13	29	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	64	11	24	1	2	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	64	12	27	2	4	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	64	12	27	1	2	1	2
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)	23	51	16	36	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	56	14	31	2	4	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	49	16	36	3	7	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	49	19	42	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	51	17	38	3	7	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	64	11	24	2	4	1	2

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 all 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>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 pupils' 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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Well Lane Primary School, Birkenhead, CH42 5PF**

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to inspect your school. I enjoyed talking to you all and watching the youngest pupils prepare for their nativity concert. I listened carefully to what you had to say about your school. It is good that most of you enjoy school and know there is an adult who you can ask for help if you are troubled or sad.

We have judged that the school needs additional help to give you a better education and so we have placed your school in 'special measures'. This means that the school will get extra help and support. Inspectors will return regularly to check that the school is making progress. The school should:

- help you all do better and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science
- improve the work of leaders and managers, including governors, so that they carefully check the school's work and take action quickly to improve matters if they find that something is not right
- improve teaching so that more of it is good or better, make sure you have lots of opportunities to learn new things and ensure younger children are given more outdoor learning activities
- ensure that the teachers help you know what you need to do to improve your work
- look and find ways to work with pupils and their families where their attendance is not good enough
- ensure that some very important pieces of paperwork designed to help keep you safe are completed quickly.

You can all help by trying your best in lessons and coming to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields  
Lead inspector

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