

Heswall St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105079
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336419
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev J Gibbs
Headteacher	Mr Chris Penn
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2006
School address	Thurstaston Road Heswall Wirral CH60 4SA
Telephone number	0151 3422556
Fax number	0151 3427940
Email address	schooloffice@stpeters-heswall.wirral.sch.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 14 lessons and saw 13 teachers. Discussions were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Approximately 55% of inspection time was focused on pupils' learning.

Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at national assessment data and the school's own assessments, policies and minutes, including information related to safeguarding of pupils, internal monitoring evidence, local authority reports and curriculum planning, as well as 93 questionnaires returned from parents and carers.

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

- whether more-able pupils are sufficiently challenged
- the impact of pupils' personal development on the quality of their learning
- provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation.

Information about the school

This primary school is bigger than average. Most of the pupils are White British. Almost none are known to be eligible for free school meals. A very small number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Among the school's recent achievements are the Artsmark Silver, Activemark and the Eco Green Flag awards.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Many areas of the school's performance have improved significantly since the last inspection. The headteacher's dedication and strong leadership have firmly established St Peter's as a good school; it has outstanding features.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given an excellent start to their education. From broadly typical starting points for their age on entering Reception all achieve a good level of development and almost half achieve above average levels in all areas of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. Good progress continues generally throughout the school because of the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are high and were exceptional in English and science at the end of Year 6 in 2009. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in some areas, for example where not all groups are challenged sufficiently, which result in pockets of slower progress for some pupils. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional support for them is planned well and closely matched to their particular needs.

The curriculum enriches pupils' learning well and contributes very strongly to their enjoyment of school and excellent personal qualities by encouraging outstanding attendance, healthy lifestyles and overall outstanding achievement. The exceptional care provided is reflected in the extent to which pupils themselves say they feel safe and in the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by parents and carers about their children's safety. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school and local communities and outstanding progress towards securing the skills they will need for the future. Their behaviour is first-rate.

Leaders and managers at all levels have clearly established roles and contribute effectively to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Systems for checking pupils' progress are good and applied rigorously in order to set future challenging targets. Governors provide challenge and support for the school in equally strong measure and play a significant part in driving through improvements and in shaping the school's future direction. Improvements in the management of the school, as well as in standards, the curriculum, assessment, and in the general ethos of teamwork and well-being amply demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the satisfactory teaching to good or better by:
 - ensuring that planned tasks always challenge the full range of abilities in

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lessons

- fully embedding revised systems for marking to achieve consistent quality across all classes and subjects.

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

The vast majority of pupils show highly positive attitudes to work. They consistently do their best and make good progress. Most lessons engage pupils well in learning. They respond well to challenges. Some learning is outstanding, for example when pupils have opportunities to make decisions and work creatively on their topics. Occasionally, pupils are not all engaged as well as they should be because the work given is too easy so the benefits to their learning are limited. Learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed exceptionally well. Individual plans set very specific targets to ensure that step-by-step progress is achieved and this is carefully checked to ensure that a good pace of learning is maintained.

Attainment is well above average and has been so over the past five years. The quality of pupils' speaking and listening is very high. Pupils performed exceptionally well in 2009 with 75% of pupils in Year 6 attaining higher levels in English and science. The current school focus is on mathematics. School assessments indicate that the proportion who are on track to achieve Level 5 in that subject is likely to increase substantially owing to the school's drive to boost the achievement of more-able pupils. A popular strategy has been the introduction of mathletics which enables pupils to work independently on a computer-based programme for mathematics.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their attendance, are outstanding. They are invariably polite and are able to adjust their behaviour to suit different situations. They are mindful of others and are extremely proud of their school and their achievements. Pupils are always keen to point out items of their work which are displayed. A very strong partnership with a school in Uganda has been fostered over the past three years. This adds to pupils' growing understanding of cultural differences. There is excellent take-up of places in after-school clubs, especially sports clubs, and pupils are fully aware of what constitutes a sensible diet and why that should be the rule. The school council organises a healthy tuck shop and active gardening club members devote time to growing vegetables. Pupils contribute a great deal to their school, for example through eco-team activities to improve the school environment. They have a very strong sense of wanting to help and do so by charitable fundraising and taking on caring roles, such as those of playground buddies and play leaders. Musical performances raise the school's profile in the wider community. By the end of Year 6 pupils are extremely well prepared, both socially and academically, to face the challenges of the next stages of their education.

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

How effective is the provision?

Good planning and the effective use of assessment information by teachers means that most lessons build well on pupils' previous learning. There are usually high expectations and good pace to learning because of the challenges lessons provide. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and good use is made of electronic whiteboards and other resources to help bring lessons to life. Some teaching is outstanding and is particularly effective in those lessons where pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own progress and work independently of adults. In a mathematics lesson for example, pupils were seen to work very effectively not only with their partners but by talking to others about their findings in order to reach solutions. Teaching assistants fulfil a crucial role as part of the teaching team and contribute skilfully to pupils' good learning and progress. There are a few occasions when teaching is, at best, satisfactory rather than good. In these lessons work is not matched well to pupils' varying abilities and expectations are not sufficiently clear. This results in pupils seeking other distractions because they are not challenged and not making their best progress. Guidance from marking in literacy books is good because pupils are regularly involved in checking their own progress and teachers point out what they need to do next to improve. Not all writing is marked with the same rigour and, as a result, the same quality is not always seen when pupils write in other subjects.

The curriculum provides a good range of interesting opportunities for learning because of the way teachers plan links between subjects. This enables literacy and numeracy skills, for example, to be practised in a more meaningful way. Though the school makes the best use of current information and communication technology (ICT) provision to

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boost learning skills, classroom resources are rather limited and prevent pupils' routine use of ICT in lessons. An outstanding feature of the curriculum is the way it is enriched by clubs and activities after school as well as a range of visits and visitors to support learning and boost pupils' personal development and enjoyment.

A safe and welcoming environment is at the heart of the school's outstanding provision of care. Provision for the most vulnerable pupils is very carefully monitored and the school makes full use of additional services to ensure that their needs are met. There are productive links with pre-school settings and work with local high schools helps to make transitions as smooth as possible. Parents and carers are very happy with the way in which their children are cared for and the vast majority are pleased with the level of access they have to information about their children's progress and welfare.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Changes in the management structure have enabled all staff members to be more involved in planning. This has led to a renewed energy and corporate drive for improvement. Training opportunities for staff in both management and subject areas have brought more focus to their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Effective management of staff has raised the quality of teaching considerably, while leaders recognise the need for the continued rigorous monitoring to eliminate the few remaining inconsistencies. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's Christian ethos and the school's ambition for all of its pupils has contributed to its sustained improvement. Community cohesion is high on the governors' agenda. There is clear understanding of the school's context within the community and firm plans to build on the links already established with schools and other groups from differing social and cultural backgrounds. There are good systems and procedures for keeping pupils safe in school, including the promotion of internet safety. Governors are watchful to ensure that safeguarding remains robust and effective.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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 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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage give children's learning and development an excellent start. They make rapid progress from joining Reception with broadly expected skills for their age. Virtually all reach a good level of development before transferring to Year 1 and a significant number are more advanced. High-quality provision for their welfare ensures that children learn in an environment where risks are very well managed or eliminated. Staff have clearly designated roles with regard to children's well-being and all help in the evaluation of progress and in tailoring the next steps for learning and development. Very effective partnerships with parents and carers, pre-school settings and other agencies contribute greatly to children's welfare and progress.

There is a very wide range of challenging and exciting activities to stimulate children's imaginations and help them develop curiosity and an eagerness to learn. They develop excellent personal skills. They understand how to stay safe, behave very well and work collaboratively with others. Minor disagreements are rare and children are quick to say 'sorry'. The very good balance between adult-led activities and those which children choose for themselves means that activities to promote early literacy and number work are widely available. Adults are always quick to seize opportunities to question children in order to encourage their language and thinking skills. The outside classroom is used very well to allow children to build on their skills through exploration and play.

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	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers express entirely positive views about the school. Many comment on the improvements which have taken place and how much their children enjoy school. A small minority expressed concerns. The most common issue raised was from a very small number and referred to inconsistencies in teaching. Inspectors agree with those parents and carers who raised that issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heswall St Peter's C of E 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 302 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	68	8	20	5	13	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	75	8	20	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	43	19	48	1	3	3	8
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	35	20	50	4	10	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	20	50	15	38	4	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	55	14	35	2	5	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	60	14	35	1	3	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)	17	43	16	40	3	8	3	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	38	20	50	4	10	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	40	20	50	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	43	18	45	2	5	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	24	60	14	35	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	65	9	23	3	8	1	3

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.



10 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heswall St Peter's C of E Primary School, Wirral, CH60 4SA

Yours sincerely

Mr Kevin Johnson

Lead Inspector

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