

# 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>	366217
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Padgett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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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>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Blaylock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Mellin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	09 December 2009
<b>School address</b>	Well Lane Tranmere Birkenhead Merseyside CH42 5PF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 645 9844
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@well-lane.wirral.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with staff, governors, parents and carers, and representatives of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including that related to pupils' progress, safeguarding and the school's most recent parents' questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Leadership and management at all levels.
- Standards in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The appropriateness of the curriculum.
- Attendance.

## Information about the school

Well Lane is an average-sized primary school. It serves the urban community of Tranmere on the Wirral. The area is of mixed housing but, generally, social and economic disadvantage in the area is high. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Almost three quarters of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is very high. About a third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, almost twice the proportion seen in most schools. Six pupils are in the care of the local authority and about one in every six pupils is being monitored as a child in need.

The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage comprising a Nursery (called F1), providing two sessions each day, and a full-time Reception class (F2). Nursery and Reception classes are based in a single Early Years unit.

When the school was last inspected, in December 2009, it was judged as providing an inadequate education for its pupils and placed in special measures. Since then it has received monitoring visits each term from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. In the last two visits the school was judged to be making good progress in dealing with the issues raised by the 2009 inspection.

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

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

**2**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

A remarkable transformation has taken place at the school. Well Lane is now a good school, one in which all who are associated with it can be proud. The issues raised in the 2009 inspection have been tackled with energy and success, with the single exception of attendance, where full success has eluded the school. In several respects, under new leadership, but with essentially the same staff as before, the school provides an exemplar of what a good primary school does for its pupils, its parents and carers, and for its community. For example, the Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with the best possible start to school life; the many vulnerable pupils with complex social, emotional and learning difficulties receive care, support and guidance of exceptional quality; and parents and carers are involved fully, as true partners.

Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress, going a long way to plug the gaps in their knowledge and understanding from past years. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are rising, year on year, and are now close to the national averages. This represents good achievement for pupils whose starting points were often very low. A significant improvement in teaching is responsible for the higher achievement of pupils. The school has successfully tried, adopted and adapted many new approaches to best meet the learning needs of pupils. This is well illustrated in Year 1, where approaches from the Early Years Foundation Stage have been adopted and successfully matched with the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is also seen in interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and in the more active lessons in upper Key Stage 2, which better suit the preferred learning styles of pupils.

Staff confidence and morale are strong. The staff present as a unified team at all levels. Leaders and managers are ambitious for the school. They want the school to improve further, to go from good to outstanding. They are fully aware that, despite rapid progress over the past 18 months, pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding from previous years and therefore, few of the older pupils currently reach their full potential. Leaders and managers have, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, an accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. They know, for example, that, outside of the senior leadership team, teachers with responsibility for leading on subjects are not making the full impact they might. There are plans of good quality to improve provision and outcomes further. The school now has a good track record of success. It has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

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

- Close the remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Continue to pursue all means to improve pupils' attendance.
- Provide further opportunities for teachers with responsibility for the leadership of subjects to impact on standards and effectiveness.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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The attainment of pupils is improving and is close to national expectations for pupils' ages in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress. For the past two years, all Year 6 pupils have made two full levels of progress within Key Stage 2 in English, either achieving or exceeding the challenging targets set for them. Many of the children have significant barriers to their learning for a range of reasons: social, emotional and learning, or combinations of these. In some classes, two-thirds of pupils are vulnerable to underachievement. Because of the highly successful provision for such children, they make very good progress, including those subject to review as children in need and those in the care of the local authority.

Pupils' personal development is good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is good, and, where there are problems, very well managed. This makes a major contribution to the feel of the school: well-ordered, with a calm, purposeful ethos, including during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils have extremely good relationships with their teachers. They trust them and feel exceptionally safe. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to keep safe and be healthy is developing very well, such as in their understanding of e-safety and of healthy eating. They develop a good sense of responsibility, enjoy a variety of sports – including at lunchtime – and have a real say in the running of the school through their involvement in regular consultations and through the active school council. They prepare effectively for the world of work in that they enjoy competition and challenge and take part in activities that promote enterprise.

Legacies of less effective learning still compromise the attainment of the older pupils, whose early school progress was not good. Attendance is proving a stubbornly difficult issue. It is below average. However, the school deploys all available strategies to improve matters. There are signs of progress. Persistent absence is falling each year and there is no doubt that the vast majority of parents and carers fully appreciate the importance of their children being at school, as a result of the school's well-publicised campaigns to improve attendance.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Excellent care, guidance and support for pupils and exceptional relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of what makes this school feel special. Each and every member of staff is fully committed to the pupils' progress and well-being. With so many vulnerable pupils the school needs to be very effective in liaising with a range of health, education and social care partners. It is. It works effectively with upwards of 20 different agencies. Transitions to other schools, especially secondary schools, are managed very thoroughly with a personal touch, particularly to ensure the smoothest possible transfer for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is building strong links with the local children's centre and plans are at an advanced stage to add a purpose-built crèche to the school, so it can promote educational opportunities for parents and carers even more effectively.

Teaching is good, overall, and teaching of outstanding quality was seen. There was clear evidence that the more active the pupils were in lessons, the more engaged in learning they became. The school's teaching assistants are a major strength in the improvement of teaching within the school. They are highly effective in supporting learning and in providing pastoral support and interventions for those pupils who need extra support and help. One of the most important factors in improved teaching is the staff's much better use of assessments of pupils' work to plan future lessons. Pupils are thoroughly involved in these assessments and have a secure understanding of what they need to do to improve. Marking and presentation are of good quality.

The curriculum has been developed and is now rich and exciting. For example, on the days the inspection took place, one class was visiting the Liverpool Philharmonic

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<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

Orchestra in Liverpool and the next day, several classes worked with a troupe of African Drummers in the hall. The school is full of stunning displays celebrating work pupils have completed, and recording events such as the Royal Wedding street party held for the community at the end of May. Within lessons, teachers plan imaginative ways to promote the learning of basic skills, often with good use of interactive whiteboards with well-chosen software programs and video clips. The programme to promote personal development is successful in helping pupils to develop responsible and caring attitudes, to make choices for themselves and to appreciate the views of others. The curriculum in Year 1 has been very successfully adapted to meet pupils' interests and stages of development, and the creation of an outdoor area for Year 1 has further enhanced opportunities for learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management have improved out of all recognition since the 2009 inspection. Whereas it used to require significant support from the local authority, the school no longer receives local authority support beyond that for most schools. Indeed, it is more often used to provide examples of good practice for other schools. Overall, the school now provides good value for money. Leaders and managers, along with the governing body, are confident in planning the future strategic direction of the school, based on accurate, rigorous self-evaluation and clear-sighted leadership. The leadership team has the full trust of the governing body and the staff. All staff have a voice that is listened to. While senior staff monitor and evaluate the work of the school extremely well, and have raised the quality of teaching significantly, teachers with responsibility to develop subjects are at the early stages of doing so effectively.

The school is driven by clear principles. Protection for the vulnerable is one. Safeguarding arrangements are excellent, including the arrangements for child protection, in which leaders and managers are heavily involved. The school is very effective in promoting opportunities for the achievement for all its pupils; special educational needs are led and managed very well. All pupils are valued, and the school has no tolerance of discrimination of any kind, including racism. Leaders and managers are fully committed to the community and to families. The school's reputation within the community is growing and numbers of pupils are rising. The school has an excellent partnership with parents and carers and all the agencies that support the community and its families, supported by effective home-school working. A good example of the partnership with parents and carers are the accredited family learning courses run in school, taught by school staff, with a crèche provided by practitioners from a local children's centre. These links are improving and making the

school a true hub for its community. Through excellent work within the community, leaders and managers promote community cohesion well and national and international links are developing securely.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Well Lane is outstanding in all respects. Children often enter Nursery with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are very low. Many have no experience of pre-school education. In the exceptionally calm, secure, well-ordered and nurturing environment, pupils settle quickly. The difference in accomplishment and maturity between Reception children and Nursery children is testimony to the outstanding progress children make in Nursery and Reception. Notwithstanding this progress, when they move to Year 1, most children's levels of development and learning remain below those of most children of their age. The quality of provision is extremely good. Opportunities for children to explore and learn through play are imaginative and exciting and promote development across all the areas of learning. Staff's relationships with children are exceptional and children thrive, including in their social and language development. Much of what is provided builds on children's interests. Children become absorbed and interested in learning and display a remarkable degree of purpose and independence in their choices. Under the skilful guidance of the teachers and teaching assistants, children naturally turn to writing and reading. The outdoor provision was criticised in the inspection of 2009. Following significant investment and development, outdoors now provides an outstanding confirmation of how learning outside, in all weathers, is so important to young children's learning and development. All children benefit, boys particularly so. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed outstandingly well. Behind the scenes, children's progress and development is assessed and recorded meticulously. Planning is a whole team activity and demonstrates professionalism, flair and a keen understanding of the children's interests and learning needs. The partnership with parents is very well developed. Parents are encouraged to stay for 'stay and play'



sessions in the Nursery and staff keep parents fully informed about their children’s progress through sharing the children’s ‘learning journey’ books, which are of high quality.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
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

## Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires for parents and carers are not normally distributed by Ofsted for special measures monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Parents and carers who gave evidence to inspectors were unanimous in their view that the school had turned itself around. They thought it a better school in all respects. For example, parents and carers with children in F1 and F2 were exceptionally pleased about how well their children had settled in school and how much they were learning. Parents and carers spoke highly of the staff’s care for their children, their children’s enjoyment of school and the progress they were making. They felt staff were very approachable. Staff kept them well informed and were always there for families experiencing difficulties, helping them in whatever way they could. This dedication was highly appreciated.

## 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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><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.

**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.**

24 June 2011

Dear Pupils



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

You may remember I visited your school on a number of occasions over the past 18 months or so, to see how well you were learning. Just recently, I made another visit with another inspector. Thank you to all those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (F1 and F2) and to those in Years 1 to 6 who spoke to us during this visit. It was my last visit and it turned out to be the best visit of all.

In December 2009, your school was not doing enough to help you learn properly. It needed help. It has had help. But most of all, Mr Mellin, Mrs Saunders and all the teachers and staff have worked exceptionally hard to make Well Lane a much better school for you. In just 18 months, with your hard work too, they have transformed the school into a good school, one that you can be proud to say you belong to.

You are doing much better with learning now. You still have a little way to catch up to the standards reached by other children in English and mathematics but you are making very good progress and catching up very quickly. Your parents and carers will be pleased to know, but not surprised, that we judged the care of staff for you, including keeping you safe from harm, and the partnership between the school and your parents and carers to be first class.

After such success, a celebration is needed, perhaps something on the scale of your street party when Prince William married Catherine Middleton. But when the celebrations are over, yes, there is more work to do!

Mr Mellin, the governors and the staff of Well Lane are ambitious. They want the school to be outstanding! Mr Rutherford and I talked to them about what might be needed to do this. It included raising standards, making sure your attendance is better than it is now, and for your teachers to put in place all their plans for the future. Of course, all these things won't work unless you continue to do your best. Also, we hope your parents and carers continue to support the school and keep in touch with it.

Well Lane is becoming a very special place to learn. Well done all of you.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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