

Heswall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105038
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377167
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jane Millward HMI

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Turner
Headteacher	John Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jane Millward
Bernard Dorgan

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Thirteen lessons were observed, taught by eight teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school development plan, pupils' work, progress data, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance data and safeguarding records. They analysed 79 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those submitted by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Heswall Primary is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority-ethnic backgrounds is lower than the national average as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the International Schools Intermediate Award and Eco School Green Flag status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Heswall Primary is a good school. Pupils enjoy learning and very positive attitudes exist. Pupils succeed in a supportive environment and care provided is of a high quality. Adults know pupils very well and provide effective targeted support to ensure they make good progress. A culture of success permeates through the school. As one parent commented, 'Heswall offers a safe, warm and friendly environment.' The school is not outstanding as some pupils are not making as much progress as their peers and rates of progress are variable across the school.
- Pupils make good progress from typically as expected starting points and overall attainment is above average when they leave school. Pupils with a disability and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the contribution of adults who provide support and targeted interventions.
- Teaching is effective, providing opportunities for pupils to succeed and make good progress. Enrichment activities contribute to the good curriculum. Lessons have good pace and generally meet the needs of all learners although in some instances, the learning intention is not always clear enough. The school follows a phonics (the sounds letters make) and reading programme. However, this is not always systematically applied. Marking of pupils work is variable.
- Well-mannered pupils are courteous and good behaviour is encouraged. They demonstrate a good awareness of unsafe situations and are well supported through the curriculum about dangers such as smoking.
- Good leadership and management are bringing about improvements. There is an ambitious goal to improve achievement and a common united approach ensures staff are working towards agreed aims. Good links have been made with a group of local schools, assisting Heswall in moving forward towards improving outcomes further. Effective strategies have been implemented through performance management to improve the quality of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the curriculum to further increase the impact on pupils' achievements by:
 - developing opportunities to enhance creativity
 - providing better opportunities for developing writing and numeracy skills in other subjects
 - ensuring the development of knowledge, skills and understanding is built upon as pupils progress through school.

- Further improve teaching and learning so that:
 - learning objectives and success criteria are specific and clear for pupils and support their learning
 - there is a consistent approach to marking so it provides clear guidance as to pupils' next steps in their learning.

- Develop the teaching of reading and phonics by:
 - providing training for all staff in phonics and reading
 - ensuring reading skills are systematically taught and built upon
 - ensuring lessons and activities fully meet the needs of all learners.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are making good progress and that they are taught well at school. This view is supported by the inspectors. Teaching meets the needs of learners and they are provided with opportunities which encourage independence resulting in pupils making good progress. Pupils report that learning is fun and that their teachers help them to improve through setting curricular targets. They are encouraged to work collaboratively, for example, children in Reception devised their own way to record subtraction sums once they had knocked down numbered skittles.

Children start school with skills that are as expected for their age. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, due to a carefully structured approach, which capitalises on children's interests. Independence is encouraged and children are curious and keen to learn. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities which ensure a balanced range of purposeful activities. Children enter Key Stage 1 well placed to access learning. In Key Stage 1, pupils writing skills are developed well due to a wide range of opportunities for purposeful writing. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Year 2 and progress continues to ensure pupils' attainment in reading being above average when they leave school. A focus on improving reading is developing in the school. Pupils enjoy reading and are regularly heard to read on an individual basis. The school does not sufficiently focus on developing the higher-order reading skills and professional development for staff has been limited for staff in the teaching of reading or phonics.

When pupils leave in Year 6, their overall attainment is above average and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils with a disability and those with special educational needs make good progress. Progress by pupils overall is good, with some variation between groups. Some pupils and groups are now making accelerated progress through effective teaching. Current data held by the school show the school is closing the gap in attainment for some groups. This is because teachers know the pupils well and are able to meet their needs in lessons.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching leads to pupils making overall good progress. Activities are well planned and pace and challenge enable most pupils to achieve at least the expected degree of progress. Pupils display high levels of resilience across the school. They work independently and respond to challenge well, for example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils were encouraged to find real-life situations to solve word problems using multiplication. The development of the outdoor environment provides an exciting stimulus for pupils and a valuable source of enrichment of the curriculum. Support staff and other adults effectively support pupils' learning and activities are usually well matched to pupils' abilities, for example, in a Year 6 lesson where sweets were used to understand the concept of ratio. The vast majority of parents and carers report that their children are taught well and pupils feel that they learn a lot in lessons. This view is supported by inspectors. Some marking effectively guides pupils in how to improve their work, especially in literacy, although inconsistent across all subjects and in some instances work does not fully support pupils making their next steps. Older pupils are aware of the levels at which they are working at and most know their targets for improvement.

Where teaching observed was less effective, pupils were directed too much by the teacher which reduced opportunities for independent learning. On occasions pupils were unclear about the learning intention of the lesson as it did not specifically focus on what the pupils were going to learn. Nevertheless, pupils remained on-task and still completed the work set. This is because pupils are keen to be successful in their learning. Although reading attainment is above average, the teaching of reading and phonics does not always systematically build on pupils' skills and understanding and inconsistent intervention is provided once pupils become 'free readers'.

Social skills are developed well through teaching. Learning develops pupils' ability to show consideration, engage in reflection and to appreciate others' points of view. Celebration of cultural differences is developed through links with the wider world, for example, through celebrating festivals and experimenting with foods from other cultures. Personal, social and health education is embedded in the curriculum. This results in a good awareness of health issues and develops pupils' understanding of potential dangers such as use of the internet.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite, well-mannered and courteous. They respect each other and are proud of their surroundings. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage readily cooperate and support each other in shared learning opportunities.

Pupils feel safe in school and disruptive incidents are rare. One pupil stated that bullying is often a result 'of a fall-out' and 'teachers sort it out'. They show a good awareness of different types of bullying and can discuss why cyber bullying is dangerous. The older pupils take on play-leader roles where they support younger pupils at playtimes. The role as Year 6 prefect is highly sought after and is highly regarded across the school. Respect, at all levels, is apparent and this shows the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There have been no fixed-term exclusions or racist incidents in recent years. A few parents and carers voiced concerns about how bullying was tackled in school. Inspectors investigated this and found behaviour to be good overall. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their child feels safe in school. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of risk and unsafe situations. Behaviour is managed well by staff in lessons and there is very little disruption to learning. Attendance is above average and pupils are generally punctual. The school has a range of appropriate strategies to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on-time.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has established a leadership team which is focused on improving achievement and maintaining a focus on strong personal development for all pupils. He is highly ambitious and has made improvements to the school since the last inspection. He knows the strengths and weakness of the school and leaders at all levels are involved in setting challenging targets for further developments. This provides the school with a good capacity to make further improvements. A new tracking system has been introduced to monitor progress of all individuals and groups of pupils. This has enabled the school to intervene earlier when pupils start to fall behind. Barriers to learning are identified for all pupils and a range of strategies put in place to help pupils catch up, when necessary.

Middle leaders are enthusiastic and skilled in their approach to driving school improvement in their subject areas. They are involved in monitoring the quality of provision and provide constructive feedback to support teachers in moving forward. Strong links between leaders and the governing body exist. The governing body knows the school well and, while proud of its achievements, challenges the leaders to make further improvements. Individual members bring a wide range of expertise to the school, which is then used to support and challenge the decisions of senior leaders.

The school has strong, positive relationships with parents and carers. Useful links have been made to enable better communication, for example, through the school website. Informative workshops provide information for parents and carers to support their children with learning at home, for example, how calculation is taught in Key Stage 2.

The curriculum meets the needs of learners as evidenced by good achievement. Reflection time is built into lessons to ensure pupils' social and moral development is given prominence. Cross-curricular links are in place and a wealth of enrichment activities ensures good pupil engagement. Some activities within 'topic' work,

especially in Key Stage 1, do not provide sufficient challenge to enable all pupils to maximise their potential. The school realises the curriculum should be re-designed to further promote creativity and build more effectively on pupils' skills and understanding. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and leaders promote equality and tackle discrimination. Leaders ensure good provision for pupils with a disability and those with special educational needs.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



8 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heswall Primary School, Wirral, CH60 7SD

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. As you know we came to see how well you were doing and what you said helped us with our findings.

Heswall Primary is a good school. You take care of one another and work hard. What you achieve in English and mathematics is good and most of your lessons are interesting and help you learn. You enjoy learning in the outdoor area and are proud of the outside environment. You have good attitudes and enjoy your learning. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and how friendly you are to visitors. We agree with you that your school is a busy and interesting place to be. All the school staff take good care of you. They know each and every one of you very well and they are able to support you with your work and any worries you have.

It is our job to find out how schools can do even better. We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to work on three things in particular:

- to re-design the curriculum to help you learn even more
- to improve the quality of teaching
- to develop ways to help you learn phonics and reading.

Thank you again for your very warm welcome and enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector

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