

Penketh South Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111198
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	378246
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Rowland

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Messenger
Headteacher	Angela Grace
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Rowland

Additional inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed twelve lessons taught by eight teachers. In addition, inspectors visited short phonics (the sounds that letters make) sessions and listened to children read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. During the inspection the responses to 115 parental and carers' questionnaires were analysed, together with responses to others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The percentage of those who receive external support, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is close to the national average. There has been significant turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection. The school holds the Activemark Award and has Healthy Schools status. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

A privately run out-of-school club operates on the school site. This is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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

- This is a good school. It has improved steadily in recent years and provides a secure and safe environment. Each child is known as an individual and the school is regarded highly by a large majority of parents and carers. The school is not outstanding because there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which prevents teaching being outstanding overall.
- Achievement is good. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good and attainment at the end of Year 6 is above the national average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress which is in line with that of their peers.
- Teaching is good. There are some examples of outstanding practice. Most lessons are lively and engaging and pupils are involved in stimulating, active learning. Planning for learning is thorough and is based on a detailed record of each pupil's progress. There are some inconsistencies relating to collaborative work and the quality of feedback to help pupils to improve further.
- Behaviour is typically good. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and show respect and consideration to others. There are very few instances of bullying and these are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils understand about unsafe situations and know how to avoid them. Attendance is high and has been so for a number of years.
- The headteacher is respected by staff, parents and carers and pupils alike. She has led the school through a period of turbulence and has set a clear direction for the future. Staff and the governing body share a common determination for the school to succeed. Progress is tracked thoroughly and action is taken to deal with any variations. The leadership of teaching is strong: good practice is shared so that performance is constantly improving. The curriculum provides a strong foundation in basic skills as well as a variety of stimulating experiences that promote pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to work collaboratively in groups
 - ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities during lessons to check on pupils' understanding and to deal with any misconceptions
 - making sure that all written and verbal feedback informs pupils about how well they are doing and about how they can improve.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

A very large majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children make in school, and agree that they develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection findings confirm that achievement is good. Pupils respond well to lively and challenging tasks where they can work together to gather information and solve problems. For example, in a highly effective numeracy lesson pupils were working outside to gather and record information about a variety of physical activities such as skipping and star jumps. They were able to discuss their ideas and could record, and explain why they had recorded, information in particular ways. There are regular and systematic phonics and guided-reading sessions, and progress in reading and spelling is good. The school's detailed records of progress and attainment confirm that attainment in reading is now above average at the end of Year 2 and when pupils leave in Year 6. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Their needs are identified and programmes of support are put in place which ensure they achieve well. There are no significant variations between the performance of different groups of pupils.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally in line with those typically expected for their age, although language skills are often below those normally expected for their age. They make good progress as a result of thoughtful, stimulating teaching and a varied and exciting learning environment. As a consequence, they enter Year 1 as confident learners with attainment that is above average. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good. Test results have been broadly average for the last three years when pupils leave in Year 6. This is as a result of staffing turbulence in the past. Inspection evidence, supported by the school's own detailed records, shows a pattern of solid improvement and current attainment is above average. The school has focused on improving the consistency and effectiveness of teaching and this has brought about a clear pattern of improving progress. Achievement in mathematics has improved rapidly. The use of performance data is increasingly thorough and accessible so that teachers can use this information to plan for lessons which enable all pupils to make good progress. Achievement in all subjects has improved steadily and records show that a very large majority of pupils are on track to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them.

Quality of teaching

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children are taught well in school; inspection evidence supports this view.

The school has focused on making learning active and engaging and this has had a strong, positive impact on attainment and progress. The needs of all groups of pupils, including the most able, are met. The best lessons are carefully planned and provide opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to explore ideas and to extend their learning. In these lessons learning is brisk and pupils develop the confidence to work independently. In a particularly effective literacy lesson, for example, pupils worked in small groups to find ways to describe an alien from another planet. Supported by the teacher and teaching assistant, they were encouraged to talk about the best adjectives to use to make their descriptions convincing. They were given the opportunity to explore their ideas in depth and to comment on the effectiveness of their own and others' work. This allowed them to work confidently and helped to develop social skills.

Occasionally, teachers do not give pupils enough time to explore their ideas in depth. Although pupils are encouraged to share their learning through the use of 'talking partners', they do not always get enough time to work collaboratively in groups to develop their ideas together. At times, teachers do not create sufficient opportunities to pause and check on pupils' understanding and to deal with any misconceptions. Marking and verbal feedback is always supportive and encouraging but does not always make sufficiently clear to pupils what has to be done to improve their work.

The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure that pupils make progress in all subjects. It offers a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities. Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils learn to work well together and to respect all members of the school community. The best teaching helps to foster a love of learning and a sense of fascination with the world's richness and variety.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the standard of behaviour in the school is good and that lessons are not disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors observed good behaviour during lessons and around the school. Pupils have great pride in their school and treat each other with respect and courtesy. Behaviour is managed consistently well and pupils respond to the high expectations that the school has of them. Records show that behaviour is characteristically good over time with no exclusions recorded over recent years. Pupils agree that behaviour is good and that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Attendance is high when compared to the national average for primary schools and has been so for a number of years. This suggests that a large majority of parents and carers value the school and that pupils enjoy coming to school. This was reflected in the many positive comments received from parents and carers during the

inspection. One typical comment was, 'Both my children are very happy at school, enjoy their lessons and look forward to each day.'

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said that the school deals quickly and effectively with any form of bullying. Pupils say that they can talk to the staff and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. They are aware of the different forms that bullying can take and know how to stay safe. Almost all parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire agreed that their child was safe in school. Many commented on the safe and secure ethos of the school. One such comment was, 'The school has a family feel and well-behaved pupils.'

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear and focused leadership. She is effectively supported by a group of experienced and committed senior leaders who share her ambition for the school. They have identified the key issues which face the school and have tackled them in a determined way. The school is well supported by an experienced governing body which knows it well and is able to ask challenging questions when required. Carefully considered professional development and support have meant that the best practice is shared effectively. This has led to a clear trend of improvement in teaching and achievement. The school's detailed system for tracking pupils' progress has meant that any variations in learning can be quickly identified and action taken to deal with this. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated thoroughly through a programme of lesson observations and work scrutiny. The school evaluates its work honestly and plans in a comprehensive way to secure improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are actively involved in this process. There is good evidence to show the positive impact of the school's strategies and this shows that there is a strong capacity for sustained improvement.

Safeguarding arrangements, which ensure the safety and security of pupils, are comprehensive. The school works closely with parents and carers and a large majority of them agreed that their concerns are dealt with effectively. One parent commented, 'All members of staff are very easy to talk to and very helpful with any concerns.' Discrimination has no place at Penketh South. The promotion of equality is good because any gaps in performance are quickly identified and action taken to tackle them. For example, the previous underperformance of more-able pupils in mathematics has been successfully addressed.

The curriculum provides a solid grounding in the basic skills of English and mathematics and offers an impressive variety of extra-curricular activities. These include a range of musical and cultural activities such the partnership with a school in Malaga. The many activities pupils are engaged in to mark the 2012 Olympic Games help to broaden their awareness of the world and also help to develop important qualities such as determination. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The active links which the school has with a number of local and national charities help pupils to understand their responsibilities to others.

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.



26 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Penketh South Community Primary School, Warrington WA5 2PN

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit to Penketh South. We were particularly grateful to those of you who agreed to meet us during your lunch hour. We were also grateful to those of you who completed the questionnaire. Your comments were very helpful.

Penketh South is a good school. It has a number of strengths.

- You make good progress in English and mathematics and standards in these subjects are rising.
- Your behaviour is good. You treat each other with respect and consideration.
- You feel safe in school. You know how to act in a safe way and the staff take good care of you.
- You have many enjoyable and varied lessons and activities.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are determined to make the school even better.

To make the school even better we have asked the teachers to:

- make sure you have plenty of chances to work together in groups
- make sure that there are frequent opportunities in lessons to pause and check that everyone knows what to do and to deal with any misunderstandings
- make sure that marking always helps you to know how to improve your work.

You are right to be proud of your school. Please help by always following the school motto: 'Do your Best; Look your Best; Be your Best.'

Yours sincerely

Stephen Rowland
Lead inspector

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