



Northcote Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104564
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 277181
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Frank Ravey CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cavendish Drive
School category	Community		Walton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Liverpool, Merseyside L9 1HW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 284 1919
Number on roll	362	Fax number	0151 284 1920
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr B Lawless
Date of previous inspection	3 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr Roy Morgan

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	Inspection number 277181
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is bigger than average, although the number attending has fallen in recent years, as in other local schools. It is situated in an area of very high social deprivation. Over half of its pupils are eligible for free school meals, much more than in most schools. A larger than average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. A small number come from minority ethnic groups. More pupils than usual join or leave the school during their primary school years. The school is part of the Walton Children's Centre that offers support for children aged 0 to 11 in partnership with other agencies.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

Significant improvement is required in relation to standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 and the progress made by pupils across Key Stage 2.

The school judges its overall effectiveness to be good. However, because of low standards and inadequate progress at Key Stage 2, inspectors judge its effectiveness to be inadequate. As a result, the school offers inadequate value for money.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage means that pupils make good progress. Progress at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall and in reading it is good. However, at Key Stage 2 teaching has not been strong enough to enable pupils to make the progress they should. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is unsatisfactory overall and is hindered by weaknesses in curriculum provision at Key Stage 2. For other pupils the curriculum is satisfactory overall, with good provision in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. The school is successful in enabling pupils to adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles. Attendance is inadequate despite the school's efforts to improve it.

Relationships are good, resulting in a welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe and where they grow in confidence. Leadership and management have been unsuccessful in raising standards since the last inspection, so are judged to be inadequate overall. Improvement since the previous inspection is also inadequate. However, there is clear evidence that recently implemented strategies are having a positive impact upon pupils' progress. This is the result of improved leadership and management. For this reason, the school is judged to have the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

1. Raise standards in English, mathematics and science, and improve pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating its success in doing this, taking action as required to ensure good quality
 - continuing to develop procedures to assess pupils' progress and making good use of the resulting analyses
 - continuing to encourage pupils to evaluate and improve the quality of their work.
2. Improve the level of attendance by re-implementing recent successful initiatives.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

From a low starting point, pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage, although standards are still well below average at the start of Year 1. Through Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics. In recent years, the school has often performed better than similar schools at Key Stage 1. Even so, by the end of Year 2 standards are still well below average overall.

Progress deteriorates in Key Stage 2 and becomes inadequate for all groups. Consequently, pupils leave Year 6 with low standards. Pupils entering school during Key Stage 2 often have low standards but even taking this into account, progress is not good enough. However, this year there are clear signs that the trend of inadequate progress leading to low standards is being reversed in response to the school's involvement in a local authority improvement programme. Progress has improved this term and is now mostly satisfactory, with some good progress evident. Progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies. It is good in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 and, therefore, inadequate overall. The school failed to reach reasonably challenging targets for English and mathematics at Year 6 in 2005 but improvements in progress this year mean that it has a good chance of meeting challenging targets set for 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It works hard and effectively to develop in its pupils a sense of personal and social responsibility. Pupils are taught the importance of making a positive contribution to the community and they respond well, being helpful and considerate to others. The school promotes cultural development successfully, with strong emphasis on helping pupils learn the richness of cultural diversity.

Pupils respond well. Behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to work and most say that they like school. Attendance is well below average and remains an issue to be resolved. Improvement was made last year through a successful attendance project but circumstances so far this year have prevented this project from being continued and the level of attendance has fallen back. The school makes good efforts to help its pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and to be aware of the dangers of drug misuse. It has a good and well deserved reputation for its work in physical education, placing great emphasis on the importance of physical exercise. The recent re-award of 'Healthy Schools' status underlines its commitment to promoting health education. Whilst good development of social skills helps lay the foundation for adult life, low standards in literacy and numeracy hinder pupils' potential future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall but remains less effective at Key Stage 2 than in other key stages. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress in developing basic skills from a very low starting point. Teaching at Key Stage 1 enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in mathematics and writing and good progress in reading. However, at Key Stage 2 teaching has been insufficiently strong since the previous inspection to enable pupils to overcome considerable barriers to learning and achieve as well as they should. This judgement echoes one made by the local authority in a recent report on teaching and learning in mathematics at the school.

During the inspection, pupils' work showed that teaching at Key Stage 2 is now beginning to have a satisfactory impact upon progress. This was borne out in lessons observed. However, whilst the overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is now satisfactory, it is inconsistent and occasionally inadequate. Good, purposeful teaching with high expectations of what pupils should achieve drives learning forward but, occasionally, a lack of urgency in the teaching and unsatisfactory use of adult support means that pupils do not learn as well as they should. Throughout the school, teachers are successful in maintaining a positive learning ethos.

Teachers mostly make good use of regular assessment of pupils' learning to plan work that will boost their progress. Pupils now have sharp individual learning targets in English, mathematics and science. Teachers mostly use these well when marking work to give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to achieve their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with strengths in the Foundation Stage and in personal and social education, but a weakness in the provision at Key Stage 2 for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the Foundation Stage, pupils are provided with a wide range of stimulating learning experiences that make a significant contribution to their progress. Provision in personal and social education makes a good contribution to pupils' health and well-being, encouraging good habits and healthy lifestyles. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good at Key Stage 1 but inadequate at Key Stage 2, where there are weaknesses in the tracking of progress. This issue is now being addressed with the support of the local authority. The very few pupils with English as a second language are adequately provided for.

The community is used well to enrich learning. For example, a local artist has supported learning effectively and, with pupils, produced a large wall painting capturing pupils' experiences. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school judges this area to be good. Whilst inspectors agree that good care is taken of pupils, some weaknesses result in an inspection judgement of satisfactory.

The school provides a welcoming and caring ethos for its pupils. It teaches them to respect others and show kindness and consideration. It helps them to grow in confidence. The impact upon pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work is good. The school council provides an effective voice for pupils' views. Two learning mentors provide good support for pupils' personal development. Good assessment procedures are now beginning to have an impact upon academic development.

The school recognises that it needs to do more to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have particular talents. The school building is very safe and secure. Child protection procedures are in place and health and safety procedures are implemented properly but some aspects of staff training are not up to date.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate because, since the previous inspection, they have not ensured that pupils at Key Stage 2 make sufficient progress or attain high enough standards. Leaders and managers are highly committed to the good of the school and have successfully established a positive ethos where personal development is good. However, an effective culture of improvement has yet to be fully established. Teaching has been monitored extensively but without significant impact on standards and progress at Key Stage 2. Effective leadership in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 has not been matched at Key Stage 2. The school's evaluation of its performance is more favourable than pupils' overall standards and achievement warrant.

The school is now taking part in a programme to support it in raising standards. This is starting to have a positive impact. Good use of assessment and a more purposeful focus on providing work to challenge pupils is helping to strengthen teaching and boost progress at Key Stage 2, although inconsistencies remain. However, the school is now addressing the issue of how to spread good practice in teaching and is encouraging teachers to work closely together to do so. The positive impact of these measures on pupils' progress demonstrates that the school has the capacity to improve further.

The school takes good account of the views of parents and pupils and the headteacher is highly regarded by both groups. The governing body works hard to support the school. However, it has yet to hold the school to account with the rigour needed to raise standards and improve progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us into your school during the recent inspection. Everybody made us feel very much 'at home' in your brilliant new school building. There are many things we like about your school. These include:

- the good start to school made by children in the Nursery and Reception classes
- the way you behave well and work hard
- how well the adults in your school encourage you to show care and respect for others and to get on well together
- how hard everyone works to make your school a safe and happy place
- the clear and polite way you told us your views about school.

There are two very important things we want your headteacher and teachers to do to make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- help children in Years 3 to 6 get better and better at English, mathematics and science, so that you all become as good as you can in these very important subjects
- encourage those pupils who miss a lot of school to attend much more often so that they can get the most out of their schooling.

We are confident that your headteacher and teachers can do these very important things. You can help them by continuing to work hard and do your best.