



# Heswall Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105038  
**Local Authority** Wirral  
**Inspection number** 287101  
**Inspection dates** 16–17 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Bamber

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Whitfield Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Heswall
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Wirral CH60 7SD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 3427491
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	214	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 3427492
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Baines
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Vanessa McDonald
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 November 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 16–17 October 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 287101
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Many pupils who attend this average sized school come from relatively advantaged White British backgrounds. The school is designated by its local authority to cater for pupils with medical or physical impairment. Because of this there is a higher than average proportion with a statement of special educational need. Otherwise, there is a lower percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than normal. The school is consistently oversubscribed, and has no problem in recruiting staff. It has been awarded Eco-school status and has a national Healthy Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'We are extremely pleased with Heswall School. It has an incredibly warm and nurturing environment and provides a stable foundation for learning'. 'when I first visited the school I felt that it was the right environment for my children, one in which they would succeed academically, whilst also being able to enjoy many other important aspects of school life.' These are typical comments made by the very supportive parents, and they encapsulate what makes this a good school.

Pupils learn and achieve well in a safe and caring environment. Because they are all highly valued and adults set high expectations for their conduct, pupils behave impeccably in lessons. They love learning and mature into concerned and positive young citizens who respect their environment and establish warm relationships with each other and with adults. Children in the Reception class have a good start to their education because they are taught and supported effectively. Good teaching throughout the rest of the school ensures that pupils achieve well in most subjects and attain well above average standards by the end of Year 6. The exception is in mathematics, in which there is underachievement amongst the more able pupils. This is because teaching lacks the same level of challenge as in other subjects, numeracy skills are not as well promoted as literacy skills across the curriculum and teachers are less consistent in setting pupils challenging targets for improvement. Otherwise, teachers' high expectations, imaginative use of resources, good subject knowledge and very effective behaviour management result in productive lessons. A strong feature of learning is the effective way in which teachers' specific expertise is used to enhance pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), music and art and design.

Pupils benefit considerably from an enriched curriculum that contributes greatly to their considerable enthusiasm for learning, their acute awareness of the value of a healthy lifestyle and to their good acquisition of basic life skills. They look forward to the many and varied activities provided in and out of the classroom. Pupils are very keen to join in all that is offered to them.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's able and astute leadership is characterised by a strong sense of purpose and a determination to continue to improve all aspects of the school's work through rigorous performance management. The school knows itself well, albeit slightly underestimating pupils' achievements and the quality of their personal development. Members of the management team work closely together and successfully foster the very positive ethos that characterises the school. The school acknowledges that subject leaders are insufficiently focused on how their work specifically impacts on pupils' learning and achievement. It also knows that it has some way to go before target setting for pupils throughout the school is fully effective in helping them improve, including in mathematics. Governors carry out their duties well, being particularly vigilant in their financial management, and ensuring good value for money. There are close partnerships and extremely effective links with other schools and colleges, outside agencies, the wider community and local businesses. These all make a very positive contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development, the

high quality of care and support, their enriched curriculum and to their good achievements.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved well, especially in the range of activities available for pupils. The accommodation and ICT resources have also improved well. This improvement combined with the school's current good provision indicates a good capacity to improve further and to continue to offer good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the progress made by the more able pupils in mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers set challenging targets for improvement more consistently

(especially in mathematics) and involve pupils more in this process.

- Focus subject leadership on how the achievement of pupils could be improved, including through the monitoring of marking.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The school modestly judges pupils' achievement to be satisfactory, basing its judgement rather narrowly on one year's performance at the end of one key stage. Looking at the wider picture and trends in performance, inspectors judge achievement to be good. Standards are well above average in English and science, and are above average in mathematics.

Children enter the Reception class with higher than expected skills, many having enjoyed pre-school provision. They progress well in all areas of their learning and enter Year 1 exceeding targets set for them nationally in their personal, social and emotional development and in aspects of their communication skills.

Most continue to progress well through Year 1 to Year 6, apart from the more able pupils in mathematics. This is because there is a lack of rigour in the setting of targets. Teaching lacks the same degree of challenge as there is in English, and science and numeracy skills are not promoted as effectively across different subjects. This results in fewer of the more able pupils achieving the higher levels in national assessments in mathematics. In contrast, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of well targeted support and a very effective partnership with a special school that provides expert help to the school's teaching assistants. The school has consistently met or exceeded challenging targets in English, but has failed to meet its targets in mathematics over the last two years.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils enjoy lessons and strive to do their best at all times. Relationships are excellent and behaviour

is exemplary. Pupils show respect for adults and are always keen to learn. They understand well how other cultures are similar to or different from their own through art, music, stories and celebrations of other countries. Keeping safe and healthy is very important to them. Older pupils have a healthy tuck shop while younger children have fresh fruit and vegetables. The range of sport offered in addition to PE is exceptional. Clubs are well attended and complement activities such as the 'Walking Bus'. Helping with daily routines in school and being involved in community projects, particularly those that protect the environment, enable pupils to make outstanding progress towards acquiring life skills to secure their future well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Children learn well in the Reception class because they are successfully encouraged to be independent, to make sensible choices and to get on well together. In this class adults work closely together to plan interesting activities based on accurate assessments to stimulate children's interest and to meet their individual needs well. The high quality of relationships between children, and between children and adults, ensures that their personal and emotional development is very strong.

Throughout Years 1 to 6, the excellent quality of relationships, teachers' effective use of resources and teaching methods, well planned lessons and the use of specialist teachers contribute significantly to good quality learning. However, some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics, already highlighted earlier in this report, result in the more able pupils underachieving.

Pupils learn effectively because they enjoy lessons, commit themselves fully to doing their best and take considerable pride in their achievements. Because they have many opportunities to talk about and evaluate their work they speak confidently. This has a very positive impact on their good achievements in English. Good use is made of specialist teachers and support to enhance pupils' achievements in PE, in ICT, music and in art and design. Teaching assistants are teaching partners rather than merely a support to teachers and as such make an invaluable contribution to all pupils' learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The vibrant curriculum helps pupils to achieve well. The school's recent introduction of a skills-based curriculum has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, the curriculum does not fully meet the needs of the more able mathematicians. There is an excellent range of enriching activities to enable pupils to foster their varying skills and interests well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress towards their individual targets. Good provision in the

Reception class results in good progress but restrictions on the use of the outside area limits childrens' experiences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well because they are well cared for in school. This is also the view of the great majority of parents. Pupils feel safe because there is always an adult they can turn to for help. The support given to pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and helps pupils' progress personally and academically.

Checks on safety equipment are properly carried out and regular risk assessments are undertaken. All procedures for the safeguarding of children are in place. Not all pupils know what their learning targets are because academic guidance is inconsistently provided across the school. The quality of marking is better in English than in other subjects; nevertheless too often it does not guide pupils well enough on how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is innovative and is rigorous in ensuring that the school constantly seeks improvement. The procedures to check that pupils progress as they should, and to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching, are usually effective. Most of the actions taken to enhance those areas identified as needing improvement have been successful. However, the exception is in mathematics where the school has been slow in taking effective action. Supported by the leadership team, staff have forged excellent links and partnerships with a variety of organisations outside the school promoting PE, student support, health and environmental issues. These have made a very positive contribution to pupils' excellent personal skills, the creative curriculum and aspects of the high quality of care pupils enjoy. Curriculum leaders make a good contribution to improvements in provision in their subjects. However, they are insufficiently focused on how their work helps pupils improve. Governors support the school's work strongly, take their financial responsibilities very seriously and contribute well to the work of the school's leadership team. In doing so they help build the very positive, and inclusive, ethos of the school.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us so welcome during the days we spent in your school. We appreciated the open way in which you chatted to us and let us know so many interesting things about your school.

Here is what is good about your school.

- You are very polite, friendly and extremely well behaved.
- You enjoy everything about the school very much.
- You have interesting activities to do and are well taught.
- All of you are looked after very well and given lots of help if you find things difficult.
- Mrs MacDonald has lots of ideas about how to improve the school even more.

Although we think your school is good, there are a few things we have asked Mrs MacDonald and your teachers to do.

- Help some of you to do better in mathematics.
- Sit down with you and discuss what you need to do in your lessons to help you improve your work.
- Make sure that the teachers who are in charge of subjects are a bit clearer about how to help you do even better in their subjects.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and do well with your work and, above all, carry on trying really hard.