

West Kirby St Bridget's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105062
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308756
Inspection date	9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr G Francis
Headteacher	Mr R Vaughn
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	St Bridget's Lane West Kirby Wirral Merseyside CH48 3JT
Telephone number	0151 625 7652
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement of pupils; the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being; and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, plans for further improvement, nationally published assessment data and the school's own records of progress over time. Discussions were held with staff, pupils, governors and the local authority representative. A significant number of questionnaires were returned by the parents and considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

West Kirby St Bridget's is a larger than average primary school with most pupils from White British heritage. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low and pupils attend from an advantaged socio-economic area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is much lower than the national average. The school has been awarded Activemark. No Year 6 lessons were observed during the inspection because Year 6 pupils were visiting the high schools they will be attending in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Bridget's provides a good quality of education. It has some outstanding features. The school is very popular with parents. There is frequently demand for more places than the school can provide and it enjoys an excellent reputation. Academic standards are high and pupils benefit from good teaching. The partnership with the church is strong and the school is well supported by an active parents association which organises events and raises substantial funds. Many parents speak highly of the school, praising its ethos and the commitment of many staff. The following comments are typical of many received by inspectors: 'Our children are so happy and content' and the school has helped us develop our child into a 'caring, well-mannered, enthusiastic learner and considerate of others'. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

Standards reached by pupils by the time they leave school in Year 6 are high and the progress that they make is good. The school has maintained this level of success for the past five years. Most pupils enter Key Stage 1 working securely at the levels expected for their age, with a significant proportion working above. Pupils' progress is good as they move through the school. They achieve well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and particularly high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 2007 national tests for Year 6, all pupils gained the expected level in mathematics, and nearly all pupils gained the expected level in English and science. Furthermore, almost two thirds of all pupils reached higher than expected levels in English and mathematics, whilst over three quarters reached the higher level in science. Inspection evidence suggests that results for 2008 will be similar to previous years. Pupils from all groups attain equally well, with pupils from minority ethnic heritage doing particularly well. However, the school is not complacent and identified that it could further improve girls' performance in mathematics as well as developing writing throughout the school. It has introduced more relevant activities to tackle these issues.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are experienced, enthusiastic and committed. They frequently attend further training, have introduced more exciting, practical activities and recently provided opportunities for pupils to undertake individual learning, for example 'learning walls,' which assists pupils' thinking skills. Teachers from each year group plan lessons together and learning objectives are shared openly, so pupils know what is expected of them. However, opportunities for pupils to apply the knowledge and skills learned in lessons and think for themselves are not regularly provided. This reduces the level of progress made by some pupils in some lessons. Relationships between pupils and teachers are friendly and warm, and expectations of behaviour are high. Pupils respond well by showing good attitudes and behaviour, and excellent enjoyment in their learning. Consequently, pupils maintain well the good start they have in learning before starting school and reach high standards in their work. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers' comments praise the effort of pupils. However, comments do not always tell pupils what they need to do next and as a result pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work further. Teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and groups of pupils.

The good curriculum emphasises the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils in Year 1 to Year 4 enjoy learning French and the school has plans to extend this provision to other year groups. Many pupils take part in a very wide range of activities at lunch time and after school, for example choir, tennis and fencing. As these activities are mostly for pupils from Key Stage 2, there is scope to widen participation

to the younger pupils. Enrichment activities include the use of the local environment to study geography and science, and visitors such as grandparents help to bring certain events to life. The school has plans to review the curriculum to provide more links between different subjects and increase creative elements.

Good care, guidance and support underpin pupils' good personal development and well-being. Arrangements for starting school are supported and appreciated by parents. Visits to the many feeder high schools allay concerns Year 6 pupils may have about the next stage of their education. Relevant required procedures are in place for child protection and safeguarding arrangements are secure. Pupils with additional educational needs are identified early and support is provided to enable them to make similar rates of progress as their class mates. Most pupils feel safe and confident that someone will listen to them if they are troubled. Pupils are polite and caring to each other, know right from wrong and have a clear sense of fairness. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council is at an early stage of development and pupils look forward to being able to express their views through their elected members and influencing more strongly the strategic direction of the school. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of caring for the younger pupils on the playground at lunch time. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have developed into mature, confident and articulate young people. Together with their excellent basic skills they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management are good. The experienced headteacher's good leadership provides a clear vision for the development of the school. He has brought vigour and challenge, leading with purpose and direction. He is supported by a caring and dedicated deputy headteacher and enthusiastic leadership teams. There has been a review of classroom practice and the revised staffing structure has clarified roles and responsibilities. This has led to a shared understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the school and how it will move forward. Through effective professional development subject leaders are confident in their roles and increasingly able to support and assist other staff in the teaching of their subjects. Subject leaders have created action plans to develop their subjects but, due to limited opportunities, the process of checking the impact of their decisions is at an early stage. Some senior managers have limited time to work alongside colleagues to assist in improving their practice. The newly introduced system for checking pupils' progress has generated much useful information about the targets pupils are expected to achieve. However, this information is not always used accurately to identify the progress all pupils are capable of making and targets set are not always reflective of the needs of individual pupils.

Governance is good. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and has successfully led proposals for important building improvements. They are actively involved in all major school decisions. Individual governors effectively contribute valuable expertise and have a good understanding of the day-to-day running of the school. They share an ambitious future for the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of education in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is good. Children join from a variety of pre-school settings and have skills which are better than most children of that age group. Together with an emphasis on developing independent skills, staff give prominence to supporting children in recognising sounds and letters, and to develop confidence as writers. So, by the time they enter Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils have achieved standards

above those expected for their age in all areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy. The good arrangements for starting school reassure parents that their children will be safe and well looked after. The school has worked in partnership with the local authority to identify how provision can be improved and as a result teacher-led activities are now well matched to the full range of children's needs. Improvements are planned for children to follow their own curiosity more when creating games and working independently. Although the outdoor area has been improved since the last inspection, the school recognises that it can be used more creatively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of targets set for pupils in the core subjects so that they are closely linked to the needs of individuals.
- Ensure all teaching provides a clear context for the application of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school when we came to see how well you are learning. You all looked very smart in your uniform. We heard some super singing as Year 1 and Year 2 rehearsed for the end of year performance. We hope your parents enjoy it as much as they enjoyed the lower juniors sports day. I am sure they will want to join you when you sing 'I do like to be beside the seaside'.

You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed meeting and talking with you. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires; all the comments helped in our work. When we asked some of you how the school could get better we were told you wanted more equipment on the playground and the school council to put forward more of their own ideas.

Your school is a good one. Most of your parents are very pleased with your school and feel you really enjoy attending it. We agree with them.

We were very impressed by:

- your headteacher who has lots of exciting ideas
- your high marks in your tests
- your teachers who want you to do as well as you can
- your enthusiasm to learn and your friendly, happy approach to learning
- your behaviour.

We have asked your teachers to give you more:

- accurate targets for you to try and achieve
- opportunities to undertake practical work to help you learn new skills.

We hope you continue to enjoy your learning at St Bridget's.