

Mossgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130262
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	381257
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Janette Corlett

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Manley
Headteacher	A C Lawler
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Janette Corlett
Gordon Alston

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed seven teachers teaching 12 lessons or parts of lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to a number of 'support lessons' where extra help is provided by trained assistants. Inspectors talked to groups of pupils in lessons, during breaks and the lunch hour and listened to a sample of pupils reading independently. Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, an adviser from the local authority and school staff including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded. They observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including the school development plan, safeguarding documents together with child protection and anti-bullying policies. Also, inspectors analysed 91 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. While the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has been in line with government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, for the last three years. Since the previous inspection, the school has had a number of staff changes in all three key stages.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has improved since the previous inspection. Attainment in English and mathematics is close to the national average and pupils currently make at least expected progress from their individual starting points. Achievement is satisfactory. Recent actions to improve pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 are having a measurable impact although senior leaders recognise, rightly, that this is a work in progress. The gap in boys' performance in reading and writing compared with that of girls is also closing.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and as a result, these children make good progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is not good consistently enough to ensure pupils make good and better progress.
- Pupils behave well and say that they enjoy coming to school. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers say that their children feel safe in school, that bullying in any form is extremely rare and that school staff are welcoming, friendly and supportive.
- The headteacher, school senior leaders and members of the governing body know the school's strengths and areas which require improvement. However, the systems for checking the effectiveness of the support given to pupils who need extra help are not robust and rigorous enough.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers set challenging individual targets for improvement in mathematics which are regularly updated and shared with pupils, parents and carers
 - regularly reviewing progress towards these targets, identifying pupils' next steps in learning and planning appropriately challenging tasks and activities in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers identify any gaps in pupils' understanding of basic mathematical calculation skills, providing swift and effective support to prevent potential underachievement at a later stage.

- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment data rigorously to plan tasks and activities that are well matched to the age and ability of individuals and groups of pupils
 - ensuring that teachers' comments in marking consistently give pupils guidance on how to improve their work and that pupils are routinely given sufficient time in lessons to respond.

- Improve the effectiveness of school leaders in securing improvement by:
 - setting up robust and rigorous systems for checking that support given to pupils who need extra help is effective in accelerating their progress.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

While cohorts vary, most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and development below those typical for children of their age, particularly in relation to language and communication. They swiftly settle into the school routines, gain independence and enjoy learning and playing together in the stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments. They make good progress to reach expected attainment at the end of the Reception Year.

Pupils' progress as they move through the rest of the school is now satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6 is broadly average and improving. Pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 has been well-below national expectations over the last two years. Recent strategies to help pupils learn more quickly in mathematics have ensured that progress is accelerating and some pupils are now making good progress. However, senior leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure all pupils make at least consistently good progress in mathematics. Parents and carers indicate they would appreciate more information on how much progress their children are making.

Pupils now have many more opportunities within the school day to practise their skills in reading and writing. Boys say that they enjoy writing more because of all the extra help and stimulation they have experienced in developing their reading skills. This is already bearing fruit in terms of accelerating boys' progress in their written work.

In lessons, pupils are keen to learn, listen well to instructions and willingly engage in the tasks and activities set. Progress is at its best when the pace of learning is swift and pupils are actively involved in 'hands on' tasks. It slows where pupils spend too long passively listening to teachers talking or where the tasks set are not well matched to their individual needs and level of maturity.

The school provides effective support for those pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. These pupils make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points.

Quality of teaching

Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and make effective use of skilful questioning to engage pupils and extend their thinking. In the best lessons, learning proceeds at a swift pace and pupils are encouraged to work quickly on interesting and engaging tasks. Skilled teaching assistants support small groups of learners who may need a little extra help with their work. Some teachers support pupils' development as confident and independent learners particularly well. This was observed in a Year 2 lesson with a literacy focus where the teacher and teaching assistant supported small groups of pupils in writing. The remainder of the class moved seamlessly and with very little adult intervention around a series of independent but exciting and challenging learning activities.

Where teaching is less successful, planning is not based firmly on secure assessment of prior learning. As a result, gaps in understanding are not always identified. Some pupils then move on to more advanced stages without a secure enough foundation in basic skills. This occasionally leads to confusion and inhibits progress, particularly in relation to mathematical calculation skills.

Teaching, while satisfactory, is not good consistently enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good and better progress. In some literacy and guided reading sessions, for example, while the level of challenge usually matches the needs of less-able pupils, the materials and texts used are more appropriate to pupils from a younger age range. This makes the session less appealing, particularly for less-able boys. As a result, while the gap in boys' performance in reading and writing is narrowing, the improvement is not quite as rapid for less-able boys as it is for other groups of learners.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and increasingly use the information to plan effectively for the next steps in learning. They set detailed individual targets for improvement in writing. Pupils are proud to talk about their progress towards these targets and demonstrate examples from their work where they have been successful in achieving them. Teachers' marking frequently gives pupils clear direction on how to improve their writing, but pupils do not always have opportunities to act on their

comments and this lessens the impact on their learning. Individual targets are not always set or reviewed for mathematics. Teachers' marking of mathematics does not always identify the next steps in learning. As a result, progress sometimes slows and is not good consistently.

Most pupils, parents and carers agree that the school helps pupils to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. However, some parents and carers and a significant proportion of pupils rightly feel that there is a need for more detailed and frequent information on how well children are doing.

Teachers and support staff promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through encouraging them to treat each other and adults in the school with respect, to listen to and value one another's viewpoint and to be aware of the potential impact of a thoughtless or unkind word or gesture.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The atmosphere in school is warm, caring and welcoming. As a result, attendance is above average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent or late for school is declining.

Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous with visitors. Most of them are eager to learn and behave very sensibly in lessons and as they move around the school at breaks and lunchtimes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage play and learn happily together. They soon learn to share toys willingly and enjoy helping with tidying-up activities. Older pupils take great pride in helping them and there is a real sense that the school is one big family.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers say that pupils feel safe in school. Most pupils agree. They say that there is very little bullying because adults in the school have made it clear that bullying in any form is unacceptable and will be treated very seriously. Racist incidents are extremely rare because the school celebrates diversity and fosters tolerance and understanding. Pupils are aware of the dangers of cyber-bullying. Screen-savers throughout the school give clear and simple directions as to what to do to keep themselves safe when using computers or mobile phones. Pupils and their families particularly appreciate help from the educational support worker who listens to any concerns and gives advice and support when needed.

Leadership and management

Strong direction from the experienced headteacher and developing senior leadership team has resulted in an improving picture of achievement and the quality of teaching across the school. This improvement over time, combined with accurate self-evaluation and identification of appropriate priorities for improvement, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvements.

School leaders regularly observe lessons and check pupils' work in books. Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled through appropriate professional development and support for teachers. As a result, the proportion of consistently

good teaching is increasing. Systems to track pupils' progress and hold teachers to account for pupils' performance are becoming more rigorous. This means that any pupils in danger of falling behind in their work are swiftly identified. However, school leaders do not yet systematically monitor the impact of targeted support for these pupils, and this means that it is not always possible to judge whether or not the support has been effective and to plan for future improvements.

The impact of the curriculum on outcomes for pupils is satisfactory. Recent changes to allow more time for individual and guided reading sessions and to develop links between subjects are helping to raise attainment and increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils and their parents and carers appreciate the good range of after school clubs. Residential visits for pupils in Key Stage 2 and the school's link with another school in Sri Lanka enrich the curriculum and also support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils willingly take on responsibility in school. Year 5 librarians, for example, open the school library every lunchtime, scanning books in and out, helping younger pupils to choose books and pairing them up with an older child to support them if the text is a little difficult.

Members of the governing body are well-informed, supportive and increasingly active within the school. They recently took part in a staff training day, working alongside teachers and support staff and gaining further insights into the school improvement process. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that the school is proactive in promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

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.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mossgate Primary School, Morecambe, LA3 2EE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to Mr Alston and me when we inspected your school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and the way you look after one another. You told us that most of you enjoy coming to school where you feel safe and enjoy playing and learning together. I would like to say a special thank you to the Year 5 librarians who showed me how to choose books and explained how to use the scanner to borrow and return them.

We judged that your school is satisfactory and improving. Your headteacher, all the staff and members of the governing body are helping you to improve the progress you make. You reach broadly average standards by the time you leave the school. I have asked them to help you to make even faster progress, particularly in mathematics, by giving you and your parents and carers more information on how to improve your work. I have also asked them to give you time in lessons to read the advice teachers give you when they mark your work and to use their comments to help you correct or improve your work. Additionally, I have asked them to give you targets for improvement in mathematics - in the same way as they give you targets in writing – and to make sure that you and your parents and carers know the targets and what you need to do to achieve them. I have also asked your school leaders to make sure that when you receive a bit of extra support, a teacher checks that it really does help you to improve.

You can help too by continuing to come to school regularly and on time, listening to the advice your teachers give you and working hard together in your school family. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janette Corlett
Lead inspector

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