

Mablins Lane Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111216
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378252
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Joanne Olsson HMI

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	491
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Su Turner
Headteacher	Paul Burke
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons led by 18 teachers. Two of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also made several shorter visits to classrooms to observe the teaching of reading. Additional visits were also made to the Early Years Foundation Stage to observe children's learning. Inspectors observed pupils at play and during lunchtime and heard pupils read. Meetings were held with different groups of pupils, members of the governing body, senior leaders and managers and teaching staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books. They considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 218 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British heritage. There are increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups, although the overall figure is lower than the national average. There are fewer pupils who speak English as an additional language than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national figure but there are fewer pupils with a statement of special educational needs than found nationally. The school has received the Healthy School status; Basic Skills Quality Mark; Artsmark Gold; and the Eco Green Flag Award. The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school houses a privately run out-of-hours childcare provision, which is subject to a separate inspection. The latest report is available on the Ofsted website.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 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 leadership and management, driving improvement to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school is not satisfactory because leaders and managers have not driven improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement rapidly enough. Consequently, teaching has not improved since the last inspection and pupils' achievement in mathematics has declined over time. A shared sense of urgency across the school has led to appropriate actions being taken to secure improvement. However, despite remedying a few small areas of weakness, improvements are too slow. As a result, there is too much variability in provision and outcomes across year groups and subjects. Nevertheless, the school provides an acceptable standard of education and has considerable strength in the warm and caring relationships that exist between adults and pupils.
- Children enter school with skills and knowledge that are lower than those expected for their age. These starting points are declining year-on-year. They make satisfactory progress across Reception but too many pupils enter Year 1 with much lower than expected language and social skills. Satisfactory progress across Key Stage 1 results in lower than average attainment which has fallen since the previous inspection. In 2011, Year 6 pupils reached average attainment levels having made satisfactory progress from their broadly average starting points. Pupils' achievement in English, particularly writing, has been stronger than in mathematics because the subject, has been a whole-school priority. Until recently, there has been insufficient attention given to making the same improvements in mathematics.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching of English is consistently stronger than mathematics because teachers plan relevant activities and provide good opportunities for pupils to write at length. An over-reliance on a published scheme for mathematics has resulted in teachers not always matching activities well to pupils' learning needs.

- Provision is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage; however, inconsistencies in the leadership of this area have affected the pace of improvement which has been too slow. Opportunities to accelerate children's social, language and independent learning skills are not maximised. This is because of limitations with the structure of the school day and insufficient use of the outdoor environment.
- Pupils' positive attitudes mean they generally behave well in lessons and around the school. However, not all pupils are excited by their learning so that some are passive or inattentive during lessons. Most pupils say they feel safe and are confident that the school deals well with bullying.
- Leaders and managers, with strong support from members of the governing body, have recently begun to tackle weaknesses robustly so much needed management systems are firmly in place. Progress since the previous inspection has been hampered by budget constraints and delays in appointing key members of staff. Consequently, the responsibility for securing improvement has not been shared well enough across the school. This has led to an inconsistent approach in improving mathematics and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Leadership and management of teaching are weak because monitoring lacks rigour. Nonetheless, the recent focus on weaknesses in mathematics is beginning to bear fruit and more pupils are making expected progress in this subject. This indicates sufficient capacity to secure the required improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - establishing clear roles and responsibilities for school improvement
 - equipping all key leaders and managers with the necessary skills to ensure they are involved fully in driving and monitoring improvements to teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - developing the current monitoring activities so they are rigorous and sharply focused on securing whole-school improvement
 - developing leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring the mathematics curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils and particularly those in mixed-age classes
 - reviewing how the mathematics scheme of work is used to ensure assessment information is used with greater precision to meet pupils' needs
 - ensuring teachers' marking provides clear guidance so pupils know what they need to improve
 - maximising the use of the outdoor environment in Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring all pupils are actively involved in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum

- providing greater opportunities for Reception children to develop their independent, social and language skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are willing to listen to explanations and apply themselves to tasks. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, children independently organised a puppet show for their friends. In producing invitations and staging the show, they demonstrated good levels of concentration, imagination and confidence when writing and presenting their work. In a Year 5 and 6 English lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of persuasive writing. They worked exceptionally well over a sustained period of time to produce good quality independent writing. Activities such as these excite and motivate pupils to take ownership of their learning, to work hard and persevere until they achieve success.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel children make good progress at the school. While inspectors found recent improvements showing that some pupils are beginning to make good progress, this is not consistent across year groups or subjects. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory progress over time to reach broadly average attainment levels by the end of Key Stage 2.

Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the school have declined over time. Inconsistent leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has impacted on accelerating children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 6, from their broadly average starting points, made good progress in English and insufficient progress in mathematics to reach average levels of attainment in 2011. The less than expected progress in mathematics is a result of leaders and managers not checking provision rigorously enough or holding teachers to account for the progress pupils make in each year group. Nonetheless, the school has recognised this weakness and has implemented better systems to address this area. Although pupils' progress in mathematics is uneven, more are making the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils' achievement in English is improving year-on-year because their reading and writing skills are systematically built on as they progress the school. They have ample opportunities to write and read for a range of purpose across the curriculum. However, in mathematics, pupils are not always expected to work hard and there are insufficient opportunities for them to practise their mathematical skills across other subject areas.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because they receive appropriate quality support during lessons. Although attainment levels for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are lower than other pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they are making better progress than their classmates in most year groups. Consequently, the achievement gap for this group is beginning to narrow.

Quality of teaching

The overwhelming majority of parents, carers and pupils agree that teaching at the school is good. The inspection evidence showed that there is too much variation in teaching between year groups and subjects, with quality that ranging from inadequate to good. Nonetheless, teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching of mathematics is however weaker because there is too much emphasis on a new published scheme of work rather than on pupils' learning needs. Teachers in mixed-age classes are often striving to deliver different mathematics topics in one lesson with varying degrees of success. Often, this strategy limits the pace of learning for all pupils as well as their enjoyment and participation. Although the teaching of mathematics has been monitored more thoroughly in recent months, teachers have not received enough guidance on how to adapt their teaching to match work to the wide range of abilities in each class.

All teaching is characterised by trusting relationships and the effective deployment of skilled teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Teaching is most effective when teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan well-structured lessons and have high expectations of all pupils. They use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and reshape explanations. Consequently, pupils work with enthusiasm and confidence. Teaching is less effective when pupils are not actively involved in their learning because teachers spend too much time talking. Furthermore, insufficient account is taken of pupils' starting points so activities are sometimes too difficult or lack appropriate challenge.

The well resourced Early Years Foundation Stage meets the needs of most children. This is because adults use questions appropriately, model new learning and plan activities to match children's interests. However, the improved outdoor area is not used well enough to maximise learning. Opportunities to accelerate children's social, language and independent skills are limited because of the structure of the school day. Purposeful learning is often interrupted as children join Key Stage 1 pupils for a structured playtime. Additionally, time is often wasted settling children when they return to class and there are not enough opportunities for them to enjoy developing their social skills during break times.

The teaching of reading is effective because skills are systematically developed through structured reading opportunities across the school. Writing is taught well because teachers have high expectations and expect pupils to work independently and for sustained periods of time. This is reflected in the quality, quantity and presentation of pupils' books.

While teachers sometimes provide helpful guidance to pupils so they know what they need to do to improve, this practice is inconsistent across classes and subjects.

Themed assemblies and opportunities for pupils to work together contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, there are too few opportunities for all pupils to reflect on their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They know how the school expects them to behave and they think most pupils live up to these expectations. However, while most parents and carers are positive about behaviour, a small minority of pupils disagree that behaviour is good and a few say their learning is sometimes disrupted. Inspectors found that most pupils behaved well in lessons and around the school during the inspection.

School records confirm that most pupils follow the behaviour code and disruption to learning is uncommon. Appropriate actions to support pupils who find managing their behaviour difficult has contributed to improvement in their behaviour. However, not all pupils are fully involved in their learning. Although pupils are compliant in lessons, some are too passive and occasionally, inattention leads to very low-level disruption.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree their children feel safe at school. Pupils know what constitutes bullying and they have an appropriate understanding of different types of bullying. Pupils say there is some name-calling and bullying sometimes happens but they feel teachers consistently and effectively address any issues raised. Most pupils say they feel safe. However, a few pupils and parents and carers feel that during lunchtime there are not enough purposeful activities; a view which the inspection evidence supports. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about safety and explore how to manage risk and keep themselves safe.

Attendance is above the national average primarily because recent improvements to the systems to promote good attendance has led to a decline in absences.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and managers have not moved quickly enough to tackle weaknesses and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. The responsibility for school improvement is too reliant on a small number of leaders and managers. Roles are not clearly defined and responsibilities are not distributed well enough to ensure a whole-school drive to improve. Leadership and management of teaching are weak because monitoring systems lack rigour. Recent improvements are eradicating previous weaknesses in the performance management system so there is a whole-school responsibility for improving mathematics. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are insufficiently robust in improving children's outcomes.

However, the pace of change has increased considerably in recent months because of strong support from members of the governing body and there is a common sense of purpose among staff. Senior leaders and managers are also benefitting from a close link with a National Leader of Education. Additionally, management systems such as monitoring and evaluation have been established so the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the school development plan and teachers' professional development are more sharply focused on clear priorities. Consequently, the foundations to secure further improvement are in place. Furthermore, the school's success in improving pupils' achievement in English, emerging improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics and the increasingly better teaching, indicate the required capacity to improve further.

Members of the relatively new governing body have an astute understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. Their support and challenge to senior leaders and managers have made a significant contribution to recent improvements. Developing links with the on-site children's centre and effective partnerships with outside agencies are used well to overcome any barriers pupils may face in their learning or behaviour. Positive relationships with parents and carers are fostered through regular communication and opportunities to share their views and suggestions. The well-attended workshops and 'Stay and Make' sessions are providing an effective vehicle to help parents and carers support their children's learning at home. The school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements. As there are

few instances of harassment, the school's provision for promoting equality and tackling discrimination is sound.

A good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular opportunities enhance the curriculum to make pupils' learning more interesting. All subjects are covered and pupils have opportunities to develop music and sporting abilities through planned programmes throughout the year. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There is a whole-school approach to developing pupils' social and emotional well-being and there are opportunities for them to reflect on moral issues, develop empathy and gain an understanding of different faiths and cultures.

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.



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mablins Lane Community Primary School, Crewe, CW1 3YR

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we recently came to inspect your school. It was a real pleasure to look at your work and listen to your views about your school. We found out that you like school and your teachers but the education you receive could be better. This means the school has been given a 'notice to improve' and other inspectors will come and visit your school to see if you are achieving as well as you could be. The people in charge of your school will be working hard to make your school better. These are the main things we found out during the inspection.

- You make satisfactory progress over time so your attainment is average by the time you leave Year 6. You make better progress in English than in mathematics. Your attendance is above average.
- Relationships between you and adults are warm and friendly.
- You behave sensibly in lessons and around the school but are not always excited by your learning.
- You feel safe because the school deals with any bullying issues.
- Teaching is satisfactory, but sometimes you have to sit and listen for too long and the work you are asked to do is too easy or too hard.

For your school to get better, we have asked the people in charge of your school to improve teaching across the school so that you make even better progress, particularly in mathematics. We have also asked them to improve how they check what is happening in the school so they can make improvements much more quickly.

Please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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