

Light Oaks Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105884
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	377315
Inspection dates	03–04 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Buckley
Headteacher	L Howard
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 14 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and a member of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding procedures, a range of documentation, including data on pupils' progress, policies, development plans, local authority reports and samples of pupils' work. Questionnaires from pupils, staff and the 72 returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of strategies to eradicate any inconsistencies in attainment and progress.
- The quality of arrangements to safeguard pupils.
- Whether teaching is of consistently high quality throughout the school.
- How leaders and managers at all levels contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average junior school, with three classes in each year group. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small and increasing number from minority ethnic groups and a few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below that usually found.

Significant staffing changes since the previous inspection include, a new deputy headteacher and a new assistant headteacher, who took up their posts in September 2010.

The school has Healthy School status and has gained Eco School Bronze, Activemark and the International School awards.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils say, 'Everybody is kind and helpful' and they feel safe, secure and happy because they are well cared for, guided and supported. Excellent behaviour and enthusiasm make a strong contribution to learning and enjoyment. Pupils have a good knowledge of health issues, are caring and considerate towards each other and make a good contribution to the community. Responses in the questionnaires returned by parents and carers were very positive about what the school does for their children.

Attainment on entry at Year 3 is broadly average, and a significant minority attain above average levels. Achievement across the school is good. Attainment is above average by the time pupils leave Year 6 and they are often well-above in mathematics. All pupil groups make good progress through the school, but there are some inconsistencies in mathematics, where boys often outperform girls. The impact of strategies to close the gap is not fully apparent. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well because they receive well organised, skilled support. This support was previously mainly directed to older pupils so, on occasion, progress for a very small minority of younger ones lagged behind a little. The school has directed more support to this small minority, and their progress is beginning to improve rapidly.

Rigorous professional development ensures teaching is consistently good across the school. Interesting lessons build on pupils' prior knowledge and motivate them to work hard. Assessment systems provide good quality progress information and thorough marking and feedback arrangements are a strong feature. The well-planned curriculum captures pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm and promotes the skills they need to become independent learners. A rich range of activities and popular clubs greatly enhance pupils' experience beyond the classroom, and some clubs are targeted at pupils who may need extra help with particular aspects of their learning, in mathematics, for example.

Senior leaders have firmly embedded a clear vision for improvement. There is a strong team spirit and staff morale is high. Leaders, managers and the governing body evaluate performance accurately and contribute knowledgeably to well-focused development plans. Good safeguarding procedures ensure the school is a safe, secure environment. Actions to tackle issues from the previous inspection have been

very effective in raising attainment and boosting progress through good quality teaching. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend strategies to eradicate remaining minor differences in performance by
 - providing girls with more investigational activities to boost their confidence in using and applying their mathematical knowledge
 - extending opportunities for girls to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum
 - asking more open-ended questions and allowing additional thinking time in lessons
 - ensuring further additional support for a very small group of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the younger classes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning. This was seen in lessons, in discussions with pupils and responses in questionnaires from pupils and their parents and carers. They work diligently, relish challenges and cooperate willingly with staff and classmates, for example, with their 'talking' or 'shoulder' partners, so they make good progress. Pupils take great care to present their work neatly.

Lesson observations, the work in pupils' books, school and national data show that all groups of pupils progress well, although there are some small inconsistencies. Over time, boys have performed more strongly in mathematics, especially at the higher level, although this varies from year to year: in 2010, for example, girls outperformed boys in both subjects. Girls' mathematical knowledge is secure but they sometimes lack confidence to select and apply this when faced with new tasks. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall. Although the progress of a very few younger pupils lagged behind, their progress is accelerating rapidly as more additional support is directed to their particular learning needs. Most pupils demonstrate good oral skills, discuss their ideas confidently and enliven their writing with imaginative vocabulary choices. Good reading skills support learning in all subjects, for example, when they researched information on teeth in a science lesson.

Pupils have a strong moral sense of right and wrong and respect the needs of others. Behaviour is excellent, particularly in lessons, and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils say the behaviour code 'helps us behave well' and find the school's Five Finger strategy that reminds them how to handle a difficult situation and reflection time very useful. 'Teachers are always there for you' was a typical comment showing they trust staff to help with any problems. As a result, bullying is not seen as an issue. They have good opportunities to discuss issues and consider choices they will face in life. Pupils show respect and consideration for others and the school is, therefore, a harmonious community where pupils learn and play happily. A recent activity to design a new planet and market it as a holiday destination gave

pupils insight into economics. Good attitudes and strong personal and academic skills give pupils a good basis for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

'We learn different things all the time' and, 'Teachers get you ready for your next class,' were typical comments from pupils. Lessons are well organised, work is usually accurately matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils and teaching assistants provide skilled support. In the best lessons, every minute of learning time is used, teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, and ensure pupils engage in purposeful dialogue and reflect on their learning. In the occasional lessons where the pace is too slow, progress is satisfactory rather than good or better. Overall, however, progress is monitored and analysed rigorously, and work is marked very thoroughly. Pupils know their targets, respond to questions posed in teachers' marking using the 'green pen' system, and say they are well informed about improving their work.

Strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy has successfully raised attainment. Effective partner and group work ensures pupils of all abilities participate and no-one remains passive. The curriculum is suitably adapted for different abilities, but strategies to boost the performance of girls in mathematics and for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not fully effective. The personal and social education programme is well planned so pupils know how to keep themselves safe, healthy and make informed life choices. Enrichment activities greatly enhance cultural and social development through a wide range of visitors and visits, such as the Year 4 visit to Lark Hill Place at Salford Museum as part of their history studies. Clubs held before and after school are varied and very popular.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The safe, well-maintained, welcoming environment and good quality care arrangements support pupils’ well-being. Pupils appreciate the Sunshine Room if they need a quiet time or to reflect on their behaviour. Any who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances are well supported. External professional agencies are sensitively directed to benefit these pupils and their families. The small group of teaching assistants provide skilled support. Good induction and transition arrangements ensure pupils move confidently between different stages of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders, managers, the governing body and staff demonstrate ambitious aspirations and clear vision for ongoing improvement. Concerted actions and strategies based on senior leaders’ searching analysis of assessment and performance data have successfully raised attainment and the quality of teaching but minor inconsistencies in outcomes remain. Leaders at all levels monitor their areas of responsibility skilfully and contribute to challenging targets, development planning and staff development. The knowledgeable governing body ensures safeguarding arrangements are secure. It brings a range of skills to support the school but also challenges and holds leaders and managers to account.

The school enjoys positive relationships with parents and carers, helps them support learning at home and provides regular newsletters and dialogue in pupils’ reading diaries. Partnerships, including those with local schools and churches and through international links with Mexico, support good achievement and broaden pupils’ experience. Good equal opportunities arrangements ensure there is no discrimination and all pupils can participate in everything the school offers. Actions to overcome inconsistencies in performance are increasingly effective and leaders and managers have identified what must be done to eradicate remaining minor variations.

Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet all current requirements, ensuring pupils and users of the building and site are always safe. Child protection training for all staff is up-to-date and all procedures understood. Projects, including the International School Award and Connecting Classrooms, greatly enhance community cohesion arrangements by extending pupils’ knowledge of lifestyles, religions and cultures in the wider world. They are less aware of different cultures found locally and nationally.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a 21% return of questionnaires by parents and carers that were mainly positive. All agree that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Most feel their children make enough progress, that parents and carers are well informed about this, that teaching is good and that children are helped to have a healthy lifestyle.

A few parents and carers feel they are not given enough help to support learning at home, their suggestions are not taken account of or that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors discussed these points with the school. Inspectors judge that parents and carers are given guidance to support learning, for example, through the home-school reading records, that their suggestions are sought and that the behaviour code is well established and respected by all pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Light Oaks Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 342 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	50	36	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	67	24	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	39	41	57	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	47	35	49	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	54	30	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	49	34	47	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	53	31	43	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	46	35	49	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	43	38	53	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	46	34	47	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	35	40	56	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	51	32	44	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	61	26	36	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



5 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Light Oaks Junior School, Salford, M6 8LU

I would like to thank you for welcoming and helping the team during the inspection of your school. Your politeness, friendliness and excellent behaviour are a credit to your school and to your families. We enjoyed visiting lessons, seeing how hard you work and meeting with pupils who happily gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. This is what we found.

Light Oaks is a good school with good leaders and managers who take good care of you all and make sure you are safe. Your parents and carers are very pleased with the school. You are taught well, make good progress and reach standards above those expected for your age. It was very interesting to see you busily discussing your learning with different partners in your lessons. The curriculum provides lots of different experiences, for example, learning Spanish and playing musical instruments and visits out of school. We know you enjoy the clubs, such as the gardening and maths clubs, and the many sports activities.

We found that sometimes, girls do not always do as well as they could in mathematics. Those of you who find learning a bit more difficult are well supported, but younger pupils need to receive even more support.

We have, therefore, asked the leaders and managers in school to:

- design more mathematical activities especially for the girls
- provide extra support for some pupils in the younger classes.

We are sure you will want to help by continuing to work hard and enjoying all you do at Light Oaks School.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur
Lead Inspector

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