

Kensington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136118
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	382029
Inspection dates	18–19 April 2012
Lead 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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Monica Mason
Headteacher	Kitty Davies
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brae Street Liverpool L7 2QG
Telephone number	0151 263 6429
Fax number	None
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur
Philip Choi
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Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 15 teachers, visited small group sessions and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a local authority representative. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including improvement plans, school and national data, policies, monitoring records and procedures for the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding). They also analysed responses in the 200 questionnaires received from parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. About half of the pupils are of White British heritage and others are from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. Approximately 24 languages are found in the school and a well above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is above average, but no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school does not meet the current floor standards which are the minimum standards expected by the government for attainment and progress. There is a high level of pupil mobility into and out of the school as families arrive or leave the area.

The school opened in 2010, following the amalgamation of the previously separate infant and junior schools. There have been significant changes in the senior leadership, and the headteacher has been in post for just a year. The school provides a breakfast club each morning.

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 successfully fulfils its aim to provide a safe, welcoming environment where cultural diversity is respected and celebrated. It is not yet good because achievement, teaching and learning are only satisfactory. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Strengths are the Early Years Foundation Stage, good behaviour and safety and the provision for vulnerable pupils, based on well promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents’ and carers’ questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and all said their children are safe and are cared for well.
- Achievement is satisfactory and attainment is broadly average. Progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage but only satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Assessment information is not always used to match mathematical activities to pupils’ different abilities or to challenge the more able. Pupils enjoy reading but strategies for teaching letters and sounds are not applied consistently. Planned opportunities for pupils to write at length and across the curriculum are limited.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are eager to learn, behave well and make good progress when teaching is good or better. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough and pupils are not always given clear feedback on how to improve, resulting in satisfactory rather than good progress.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school, saying, ‘Everybody respects us and cares for us’. They are polite and cooperate well with their classmates and staff. Consistent behaviour management has resulted in a calm, harmonious environment. If any problems arise, pupils are confident they are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- After failing to meet floor standards in 2011, senior leaders swiftly implemented rigorous performance management strategies including those to improve teaching, made full use of local authority expertise and strategically directed pupil support where most needed. School data and inspection evidence show these actions are successfully

narrowing the gap in attainment, rapidly accelerating progress and increasing the proportion of good teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment and accelerate progress by:
 - improving transition arrangements between Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 so good progress in learning is continuous
 - in mathematics, ensuring assessment information is used to provide work for pupils' different abilities, and particularly to challenge the more able
 - in writing, providing more opportunities for pupils to use and extend their skills in all subjects.
- Improve the way letters and sounds are taught by:
 - teaching pupils in small, focused groups tailored to their ability
 - ensuring all staff are fully trained in letters and sounds strategies
 - reviewing the time of day when letters and sounds are taught.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching to good or better by:
 - raising staff expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - increasing the pace of learning to accelerate progress in all lessons
 - ensuring all resources, including teaching assistants, are fully utilised
 - providing marking and feedback that shows pupils how to improve their work and ensure they act on this.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Many pupils arrive at school with little or no knowledge of English, and a significant number of older pupils have had no previous educational experience. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at low starting points, particularly in language and communication. They quickly feel secure and confident in the welcoming, exciting environment, keen to investigate the stimulating activities and to learn in the well planned and resourced outdoor area. Children develop their language skills well, for example by describing the taste of the Three Bears' porridge, pretending to be a frog answering questions posed by their classmates, and enjoying daily letter and sounds activities. They progress well in all areas of learning, and typically enter Year 1 with skills just below those expected.

Good behaviour and attitudes were observed in all lessons. Pupils tackle tasks willingly, are helpful to classmates and staff, and try to present their work carefully. Questionnaire responses show parents and carers feel their children progress well. However, inspection evidence confirmed the school's evaluation that progress is satisfactory overall, but good where teaching is stronger. However, children's good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not fully built on in Key Stage 1 so progress slows to satisfactory. Some mathematical tasks are not closely matched to individual needs or to stretch more-able pupils, and pupils have few chances to write at length and in different subjects.

Effective actions have rigorously addressed issues that resulted in well below average outcomes in the 2011 national tests. School data and pupils' work books show the gap in

achievement between school and national expectations is rapidly narrowing. Pupils currently in Year 6 are securely on course to meet their targets and reach broadly average standards. Pupils learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils, those supported by school action plus and those pupils who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances, progress at the same rate as their classmates.

Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils know letter sounds, 'sound out' words and use the pictures, but progress for more-able and lower achieving pupils slows when they are taught in large groups. Not all staff have received training and teaching sessions are not always timed when pupils are at their most receptive. Progress in reading improves in the older classes as language knowledge becomes more secure. Pupils make good use of the school's high quality library and enjoy reading a wide variety of books. By the time pupils leave Year 6 their attainment in reading is average.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers feel their children are taught well but the inspection confirmed the school's evaluation that teaching is satisfactory. School monitoring records show the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Lessons promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, resulting in the friendly, respectful relationships seen between pupils and staff. Pupils behave well and say they enjoy their lessons, especially physical education, history, art and literacy. Good or better teaching features good subject knowledge and questioning, effective use of assessment information and lessons move along at a lively pace. Year 6 pupils were totally engaged by an imaginative task, used ambitious vocabulary to write in character and made excellent progress. Well organised support in class and in small group sessions is effectively targeted to the particular needs of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. Staff do not always use assessment information well to challenge pupils of all abilities. In Key Stage 1, progress slows to satisfactory because information from the Early Years Foundation Stage is not used sufficiently well to ensure learning builds on children's previous knowledge. Pupils say they know their targets and receive feedback on how to improve. However, their workbooks show inconsistencies in marking; pupils' efforts are celebrated but they receive limited advice for improvement and are not always expected to act on this. Sometimes lessons lack pace and the skills and time of the teaching assistants are not deployed to best effect.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have very positive views of school, saying they feel safe and cared for and their parents and carers agree. Inspection findings confirm these views. Observations show pupils are keen to learn, form good relationships and are considerate and respectful towards others. The many different cultural heritages mix harmoniously and happily. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or on the roads, and this is well promoted through themed weeks such as Road Safety Week. The behaviour code is seen as fair by pupils, and pupils devise class rules. Pupils say, 'We make sure we sort out any arguments ourselves', and activities such as anti-bullying week ensure they are aware of different forms of bullying such as cyber-bullying or racism. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying, but pupils do not regard this as a problem, saying staff listen to them and act swiftly and effectively to deal with any rare incidents that occur.

Attendance is average and has improved due to the school's rigorous actions, including the work of the learning mentor and family support workers. The breakfast club provides a calm environment so pupils who attend are well prepared for learning each day.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and the governing body are providing effective leadership to improve the school. The governing body provides knowledgeable, informed challenge and support for the new leadership team, particularly in the drive to raise standards. In the short period since amalgamation, leaders have successfully developed a united ethos. Staff morale is high, and all are keen to contribute, for example in 'lesson study' to review and evaluate their own and others' practice. Well-planned professional development and performance management systems have increased the proportion of good teaching. The agreed behaviour management policy has improved behaviour. Rigorous systems to monitor teaching and learning and track pupils' progress provide the basis for accurate self-evaluation, sharply focused development plans and performance management targets. Together these provide firm foundations for further improvement. Middle leaders monitor their subjects but do not always spot areas of weakness shown in pupils' work.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it meets pupils' needs, provides the basic skills and adequately prepares them for the future. Well promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means pupils are well behaved, respectful and considerate towards others. Interesting, popular extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs provide experiences pupils might not gain otherwise: visits out of school, a residential trip and visiting musicians from the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Providing equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work. Effective partnerships with all external agencies help remove barriers and support pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive focused support, often in very small groups or individually. The school welcomes parents and carers as partners in promoting pupils' well being and learning; the weekly family breakfast club is well attended and there are courses for parents and carers. Safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements and give no cause for concern, the site is safe and staff training is up to date.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



20 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kensington Primary School, Liverpool L7 2QG

The inspection team would like to thank you for the way you welcomed and helped us. You were very polite and friendly and told us many things about your school. We enjoyed watching you learning a dance in assembly, and hearing Year 5 singing 'Food glorious food'. Your parents and carers told us they are pleased with the school. We would like to tell you what we found.

We judged your school to be satisfactory. Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The leaders and managers keep you very safe and care for you well, and you trust them to help with any problems. You are keen to learn and said you enjoy lessons and reading. We could see you really like PE! Teaching is satisfactory so you make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected at your age when you leave the school.

We think you can make faster progress and more of you could reach higher levels so we have asked the leaders and managers to:

- further raise your attainment by building on the good progress you make in the Nursery and Reception classes, by always challenging you to do better, especially in mathematics, and giving you lots of opportunities to practise your writing in all subjects
- improve the way you are taught letters and sounds
- make sure you are always taught well, with lessons moving along at a good pace and marking and feedback always showing you how to improve your work.

I know you are enthusiastic about all you do in school so I am sure you will do your best to help the staff as they work to improve Kensington School.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur
Lead inspector

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