

Light Oaks Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105894
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	377316
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Sharona Semlali

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Lewis
Headteacher	Lisa Thelwell
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali
Clare Henderson
Jean O'Neill

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Seventeen parts of lessons were observed and 10 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They looked at pupils' work, safeguarding documentation, the school's tracking and assessment data, governing body minutes and the school improvement plan. Questionnaires from 82 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff were analysed.

Information about the school

This is slightly larger than the average -sized school of this type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meal is lower than average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low. The school has gained an Eco Green Award, International Schools Award, I Can Accreditation and is an Every Child A Reader School. Since the last inspection there have been a few changes to the staff and the leadership team. There is a breakfast- and after-school club provision that is not managed by the governing body.

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

Key Findings

- This is a good and improving school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching and progress vary and some of the new leaders are not yet fully effective. Nevertheless, attainment is rising and attendance is improving despite there being some instability of staffing. One parent said, 'I'm impressed with every member of staff.'
- Achievement is good. Attainment when pupils leave school is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is good because pupils enjoy learning and the exciting curriculum always takes their interests into account. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress although outdoor provision is not yet fully developed and limits children's investigative and independent skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a variety of quality resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), that help to sustain pupils' good engagement with learning. Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what they are learning. The pace of learning is not always brisk enough especially when lessons lack challenge and pupils spend too long being inactive and listening to adults.
- Most pupils, including the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils are very polite and kind to each other and to all adults. They have good attitudes to learning and respond well to praise. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and respond well to the school's behaviour management systems.
- The visionary headteacher provides determined leadership and is supported by a well-led governing body. She leads teaching well although a few shortcomings remain. Although the leadership team is relatively new all have an accurate view of the school's strengths and developments. Management of performance is improving and staff are more accountable for raising achievement. However,

as yet not all leaders make full use of the data available when planning priorities in the subjects they lead.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress to outstanding by:
 - improving the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to give children more opportunities to investigate and develop independence
 - ensuring that teachers in all lessons consistently promote challenging and active learning.
- Raise leadership and management to outstanding by ensuring that all leaders use assessment and data more consistently when setting priorities and making future plans for the subjects they lead.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with the good progress their children make and inspection evidence supports their view. A parent comments 'I'm thrilled with my child's progress.'

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Children are very independent, happy and quite confident at making choices. However, these skills are better promoted in the Reception classes than in the Nursery. Nevertheless, overall progress is good and children reach the expected goals across all areas of learning. Learning in the classroom is good but occasionally there are not enough opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy skills in the outdoor environment.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers build successfully on the gains made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and progress is good. Reading is above average, demonstrating the improving impact of changes. Pupils talk very confidently about their favourite authors. Learning in lessons is good. Outstanding progress was evident in a Year 2 science lesson where pupils' thinking was extremely challenged by making predictions, problem-solving and investigating which material will clear up puddles. Pupils quickly understood the meaning of some of the scientific vocabulary such as 'expand,' 'flexible' and 'fair testing.' Similarly, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils showed high levels of confidence and independence in solving problems involving repeated groups of objects, with some using laptops confidently. Occasionally, when teaching is less effective, the rate of progress slows as pupils become restless and are not engaged with their learning.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress due to the support they receive in and out of class. They particularly benefit from different types of reading

interventions. A few parent and carer volunteers are trained to boost reading and this is helping to improve reading skills throughout the school.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. Most of the lessons observed were good, and a few were outstanding and satisfactory. All lessons show strengths including displays that prompt and guide so that pupils understand what they are learning about. Feedback is effective. It is either given verbally or as a written comment in pupils' books and is mostly appropriate to their age. Comments ensure that pupils understand how well they have achieved. Teachers have good subject knowledge about letters and their sounds and these are taught in a systematic and active way. As a result, reading is enjoyed and pupils apply their skills to reading and spelling unfamiliar words. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were taught successfully to read alternative sounds to 'm'. Pupils had fun in finding a partner and reading their words that had alternative sounds. All were saying the sounds correctly. Teachers make good use of different types of reading resources to make learning interesting. This was seen in a Year 2 class where pupils were learning about 'The Great Fire of London'. Pupils had to put the historical words in alphabetical order for their glossary and most used the classroom displays successfully to help them.

The best lessons go at a brisk pace and teachers make effective use of questioning to probe and challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils have every opportunity to be actively involved in their learning and to find out for themselves. In a Year 2 science lesson pupils used laptops efficiently to predict, sort and correct answers in relation to absorption. However, this quality of teaching is not consistent in all lessons when pupils are not given sufficient challenge and spend a long time listening rather than being involved in activities.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Warm relationships ensure that children are happy. The indoor classrooms provide a wide range of activities and children work independently as well as with an adult. In a Reception class, children enjoyed finding numbers in the classroom and then successfully doubling them. The outdoor provision does not match that of indoors and is at an early stage of development. It is not always used effectively and occasionally there are too many adult-led activities. This prevents children making choices for themselves, being independent and investigative. This was observed when two groups of children were chosen to go outside with one group playing skittles and the other measuring the length of the pathway with different adults. Few children were given the opportunity to learn independently.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. These pupils are well-supported and prompted by skilled staff. For example, a teaching assistant enabled a group of pupils to record their sentences and listen to see how they could improve them.

Almost all parents and carers expressed the view that their children are taught well and the inspection findings confirm this.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with behaviour and safety. This concurs with inspection findings. Pupils say behaviour is always good. They are kind and considerate towards others. This is echoed in their discussions, 'we play with children we don't let them be by themselves'. Behaviour is typically good at all times when pupils are moving around the corridors, having their lunch and in the playground. Pupils know the rules that are displayed in school and say that most of them keep to them. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including racism. Records indicate this is not an issue in the school and pupils are clear about how to sort out any problems, such as name-calling. They are confident that staff will help to sort out any issues when needed. Pupils have a good knowledge about how to keep themselves safe from fire, water, road and the Internet because this is taught well in lessons.

Pupils are involved in keeping the school safe and orderly. The school council considers issues that require them to decide what is and what is not safe. The Eco-group helps others to know about keeping their environment safe. Pupils say, '...don't put litter in the sea, don't put it on the ground, follow the Eco-rules...'

Attendance is average and improving as a result of a raft of initiatives provided by the school.

Leadership and management

The very capable leadership of the headteacher, together with key leaders, has sensitively managed change despite the challenges of the instability of staffing. The sharp focus on raising attainment and attendance is reaping benefits. All leaders have a clear vision, high aspirations and a commitment to further improvements. Effective monitoring of teaching has led to good, continuing professional development and performance management for all staff. Although relative weaknesses remain, teaching and learning are improving. Good practice is shared among staff resulting in improved attainment. Pupils' learning is checked regularly and a wealth of assessment information is now available. This information is used well to track pupils' progress but as yet not all leaders, especially those new to their roles, fully exploit this information when setting priorities for the subjects they lead. Nevertheless, leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and actions are in place to build on current successes. Therefore, capacity to improve is good.

Members of the governing body are fairly new but give effective support and challenge, including holding the school to account for decisions. Governors are actively involved in monitoring such as doing a work scrutiny to evaluate the quality of marking. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. School leaders effectively promote equality by offering interventions and support to close any identified gaps in learning between the different groups of pupils. Any form of discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils' participation in the International Schools award has extended their global and cultural understanding. They understand 'one world not third world'.

The curriculum is imaginative, well-balanced and takes into account pupils' interests. It provides a wealth of enrichment activities such as experiencing the hatching of chicks and visits including the museum of science and industry. Pupils have enjoyed bringing in their bicycles and scooters to investigate the concepts of pushing and pulling. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The vast majority of the parents and carers are positive about the school. Almost all would recommend the school to others.

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.



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors and for looking after us when we visited your school. We enjoyed listening to you when you spoke about all the things that you like about your school. We felt that you were very friendly, kind and polite.

These are some of the things that we found out about your school. You go to a good school. You are getting better at attending every day. Your progress is good because you work well in all lessons. You behave well in lessons, walk sensibly around the school and play well with each other during playtimes. You enjoy your lessons as your teachers make them fun and they ask you what you are also interested in. Your headteacher and other school leaders lead your school well and are determined that you will do your best. We were pleased to see that you trying to save the environment by recycling your paper and plastic bottles and trying to remind each other that it is important to save water. You have water butts around the school and have received the highest award which is the Eco Green Flag Award.

In order for you to do even better we have asked your school to do the following things. Firstly, to help you to make even more progress by ensuring that all of your lessons go at a fast pace, activities challenge you and fully involve you in your learning. Secondly, to help all of the leaders, especially the new ones, to make full use of all the information available and help you to make outstanding progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard and coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Sharona Semlali
Lead inspector

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