

Linacre Primary School

Thornton Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 5ED

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is an improving school. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been rising steadily and pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are good across the school. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They have a clear view of the progress made by all pupils and plan lessons that challenge them to do well and improve.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for pupil premium funding all make good progress because effective individual and group support meets their needs.
- The headteacher has a clear view of how well the school is doing. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have focused on improving the quality of teaching which has led to improvements in pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good and pupils show respect for each other and adults in the school. They say that they feel safe and are cared for well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good rather than outstanding. In some lessons there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work on their own, and teachers sometimes talk for too long.
- Although achievement overall is good, boys do not make as much progress as girls.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and with senior staff and middle leaders. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading habits and how they enjoy reading.
- Thirteen responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined, including information about pupils' progress and school development plans. Work in pupils' books and information about behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also looked at.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gary Kirkley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Linacre is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Over half the pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average, and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gained a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the International School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and accelerate pupils' progress still further by:
 - sharing existing best practice more widely across all teachers and subjects, and providing teachers with opportunities to observe outstanding practice in other schools
 - making sure that teachers do not talk too much, always ask challenging questions and give pupils the opportunity to work things out for themselves.
- Ensure that teaching strategies reflect the learning needs of both boys and girls and close the gap in their levels of achievement by:
 - providing more opportunities for investigation and practical activities in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge well below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress and by the time they start Year 1 they have reached standards much closer to those expected for their age.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been rising, and is now close to the national average. In 2012, Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment had improved from significantly below average at the end of Year 2 to close to the national average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make sustained progress over time in all classes and all subjects. Almost all pupils make at least expected progress, and the proportion making more than expected progress is above average. Pupils' work shows that they are doing well throughout the school.
- Boys make good progress from lower starting points, but they generally achieve less well than girls throughout the school.
- The school has robust processes to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and pupils supported through the pupil premium all achieve well. They receive helpful and effective support and guidance which ensure that work is well planned to meet their needs. As a result, there is no significant difference between the achievement of these groups of pupils and that of other pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. There is a strong emphasis on developing reading and communication skills from the moment children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Reading is encouraged throughout the school, and even weaker readers use good strategies to work out difficult words. Pupils say they enjoy reading. Attainment has been rising steadily and this helps them to do better in other areas including communication, writing and mathematics.
- Parents are rightly pleased with the progress their children are making. One parent said that, 'the school is really good at English and mathematics and brings out the best in children'.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has resulted in improvements in pupils' learning and achievement across the school.
- Teaching is now securely good throughout the school. For example, in one Year 6 mathematics lesson, groups of pupils were working together investigating the properties of different numbers. They were encouraged to develop questions about the numbers to ask their fellow pupils. The teacher challenged them to go further and ask multi-step questions. As a result, they were enthusiastic about their learning and made good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they plan and deliver lessons that challenge all pupils. More-able pupils are given harder work and those who need extra help get it. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
- The extra support given to disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who receive pupil premium funding is carefully targeted and effective. This includes smaller class sizes in Year 6, extra support within classes and individual or small group teaching outside the classroom. This ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and keep a close check on pupils' understanding during lessons. They use questioning effectively so that any misunderstanding is spotted and corrected. Sometimes, teachers do not ask questions which are challenging enough, and sometimes they talk for too long before allowing pupils to work independently. In these lessons, the pace of learning is slower.
- In some lessons, boys are more passively engaged because lessons are not linked to real life-situations and they do not have opportunities for practical investigation or to work things out for themselves.

- There is a good range of resources available to encourage pupils to enjoy their learning. Interactive whiteboards are used well in a number of lessons. For example, in one lesson younger pupils enjoyed matching sounds and moving groups of letters to build up words.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning and try to do their best. In pupils' books work is well presented and it is clear that they take pride in their work. Marking is detailed and helpful. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good both in classrooms and around the school. There is a strong expectation that pupils will respect and care for each other in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils have very positive relationships. They get on well with each other and are polite and friendly to staff and visitors to the school. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibility as playground buddies, as members of the eco-committee or school council.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are very well cared for. Parents agree strongly with this. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including on the internet. They value visits from the police, fire service and other local organisations. They know about different forms of bullying and say that bullying is very rare. If it occurs they know who to turn to and are confident that the school sorts it out quickly and fairly.
- Although pupils say behaviour is usually good, some pupils do misbehave occasionally. School records and inspection evidence show that poor behaviour is rare, and that when it occurs the school deals with it in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Inspectors observed a large group of Year 6 pupils voluntarily starting school early each day so that they could receive extra teaching to improve their learning.
- Pupils enjoy school. One parent said that her child loved coming to school. Pupils are punctual to lessons and attendance has been rising. However, a small minority of pupils do not come to school often enough.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong and ambitious leadership from the headteacher and other senior managers has led to a steady rise in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. As a result, there is a very positive atmosphere throughout the school, shared among all staff.
- School leaders, including the governing body, check the school's performance rigorously. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. This has enabled them to make effective plans to improve the school.
- There is a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Robust systems provide accurate information about the quality of teaching over time. This helps teachers' professional development by identifying best practice and areas for improvement, and the provision of appropriate training and development opportunities. However, leaders do not yet make full use of the best teaching in the school or elsewhere as examples to help improve teaching further.
- Appraisal and performance management systems are thorough and take account of pupils' progress. This is linked to decisions about teachers' salary progression.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs. There is a good range of enrichment activities including sporting and cultural clubs, trips and visits. Many of these activities are linked to the Children's University. The school has developed strong international links. During the inspection, for example, one group of pupils was in Vienna as part of a Comenius project.
- As a result, there are many opportunities that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school.
- The school makes strong efforts to engage with parents and involve them in their children's

learning. For example, it runs a series of family learning support courses and classes. As a result, parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

- The local authority has provided helpful support to the school to help it to improve teaching and learning.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance has improved since the last inspection and this has contributed to the school's increased effectiveness. Governors now feel better informed and have a much clearer understanding of how well the school is doing. They are actively involved in monitoring its work and performance and, where necessary, provide challenge to do better still. They are well aware of how pupil premium funding has been spent and its impact on attainment and progress. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104853
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	404961

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Carney
Headteacher	Caroline Wheatley
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
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