

Booker Avenue Junior School

Booker Avenue, Liverpool, Merseyside, L18 9SB

Inspection dates

11–12 December 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| 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 | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress. They reach very high standards in mathematics; standards are high in reading and some pupils reach high standards in writing. Pupils' achievement is good and has improved markedly since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and some lessons have outstanding teaching.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and enthusiasm for learning contribute strongly to their good achievement. Their personal development is excellent. They have a mature understanding of how to get on with others and are adamant that they feel safe in school.
- The school is led and managed well. The perceptive and firm management of the work that staff do has brought about significant improvement to teaching. The local authority has been vigorous in supporting improvement.
- Governors are exceptionally diligent in the challenge and support they provide and in ensuring effective use of funds.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quantity and quality of boys' writing are less impressive than those of girls. They tend to write less and are sometimes less adventurous in their choice of words and expressions.
- Lessons are not always planned for maximum efficiency in enabling pupils to learn new things. Teachers do not always intervene to clinch key points with a class. Sometimes teachers pack too many activities into a lesson, which limits opportunities to reflect and to clarify what has been learnt.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, and 13 teachers were seen. Two lessons were observed in partnership with senior staff. In addition, assemblies were observed and visits were made to many parts of the school at break and lunch times. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with two members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and a group of pupils. An inspector spoke with half a dozen parents at the school gate.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils’ work in the current year, the school’s most recent national assessment results and information on pupils’ progress. They also looked at the school’s evaluation of its strengths and areas for development and its improvement plans. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), of the 34 questionnaires completed by staff, and the school’s surveys of parents’ and pupils’ opinions.

Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Booker Avenue Junior School is larger than the average size primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. About one fifth of pupils is from various minority ethnic groups, but most have English as their first language and few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school has met the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The staffing of the school has been fairly stable since the previous inspection. The number of pupils in the school has been stable, with a slight fall in numbers this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - encouraging boys to write more and to use more adventurous words and expressions in their writing
 - ensuring that all lessons are planned for maximum effectiveness in enabling pupils to learn new things and that what is planned is modified where necessary as a lesson proceeds
 - making certain that there are not too many activities in a lesson
 - allowing opportunity for pupils to reflect on the learning from an activity before pushing on to the next.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

Good

- There has been strong improvement in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Pupils join the school in Year 3 with standards that are above those found nationally, with many recorded as having reached the highest level for their age. They make good progress. Standards are very high for boys and girls in mathematics and in 2012 six pupils reached a standard equivalent to GCSE.
- Outstanding progress was sometimes seen in lessons for literacy, mathematics, science and music. The school has a strong tradition of good achievement in sports and in choral and instrumental music – a tradition that pupils maintain with commitment and enthusiasm.
- Pupils are eager to learn. Many lessons have a sense of urgency and teachers and pupils are often keen to press on to the next piece of work. Pupils take pride in their learning and many are able to grasp new ideas quickly. In mathematics, some older pupils were delighted to have found a quicker way to do a particular kind of sum. However, there is not always chance for reflection. While solving problems in Year 6 mathematics, some found different methods; in a literacy lesson, all were able to find a powerful adjective for a particular sentence – but there was insufficient opportunity to think about which might be the best.
- Standards are high in reading; boys and girls are fluent readers and many are more competent than most pupils of the same age.
- Some pupils' writing is excellent, although, overall, writing is weaker than reading. A girl in Year 4 wrote a poem at the computer that included: 'A sudden wave of a chocolate sea...a lollipop from a liquorice land'; moreover, pupils in that class knew how to punctuate clauses within sentences. Pupils are generally provided with ideas that stimulate their imagination and are encouraged or chivvied to get on with their writing. They are advised well on the next steps for improvement.
- Girls generally do a little better in writing than boys. Sometimes boys make less effort with their writing and produce less work. Their choice of words is less exciting on occasion and this restricts the quality of their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs respond well to the encouragement and support they receive. They are making good progress from their starting points. The progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding is good and some reach high standards. The headway they make is strong in relation to the progress that such pupils make nationally. The school is vigilant in keeping track of the progress of pupils who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances. Extra help is provided for any who might seem to be slipping behind.
- Pupils from all backgrounds do equally well. Many pupils of minority ethnic heritage reach very high standards. Those who need support in mastering English receive effective support.

The quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching is good and outstanding teaching was seen in some lessons. Learning is well-supported by teaching assistants. Relationships in classrooms are excellent. Teachers are highly conscientious in the planning of lessons to engage pupils' interest. Pupils respect their teachers. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds give full attention in lessons and take pride in their written work. They are sometimes bursting with enthusiasm to share their ideas; lessons are characterised by a 'hum of endeavour'. Pupils in Year 5 grappled eagerly with the plots and personalities of Elizabethan England and developed an impressive empathy with the issues of those times.
- Sometimes lessons are planned with too much to get through in the available time; occasionally there is actually a clock ticking to provide a sense of urgency. This brings a commendable speed to pupils' work. Teachers circulate in the classroom to encourage pupils and to steer their work

in the right direction. They note answers that are satisfactory, and others that are excellent, but do not always stop the pupils from working for a short time so that they can explain what makes a really good answer.

- The presentations and activities that teachers plan and deliver are generally efficient means of developing pupils' understanding. For example, explanation of methods and the way of setting out work in mathematics is usually clear. In two lessons with weaker pupils, the method was not entirely fool-proof and, subsequently, pupils were a little confused. Teachers almost always make sensible arrangements so that pupils of different abilities can cope with the activities and extend their learning; very occasionally, more-able pupils could be taken a step further. In lessons for those who find it difficult to learn, staff are careful to reinforce simple points from previous lessons and ensure that they do not push pupils too hard.
- In the half-hour reading sessions for all pupils at the start of a day, pupils have chosen fiction or non-fiction books appropriate for their capabilities. They are generally developing a good grasp of the subtleties of a story line and the development of different characters, and this is assisted by the reading logs that they keep. Teachers often work with a group to coach such skills. Occasionally, a little more interaction with the silent readers might sharpen their appreciation of a book.
- Marking values pupils' work, encourages effort and painstakingly points the way for further development. In the best examples, pupils followed up immediately on teachers' suggestions with additional writing to clarify or develop a point. The school has successfully given attention to the improvement of marking in recent years.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is excellent. They are considerate to one another and courteous to adults. In lessons there is often a palpable strength of commitment to learning. There was hardly ever a hint of negative behaviour in lessons seen. Pupils were unfailingly keen to please their teachers and to help one another. The school's records for the last few years show no significant behaviour issues. Parents, staff and pupils themselves confirm that behaviour is an established strength of the school.
- Pupils are strikingly impressive for their years in their understanding of how to get on with one another. They recognise that occasionally an individual can tend to wind others up and that some can overreact to situations. They know that friends can fall out and later make up their disagreements. Against this realistic understanding of personalities and personal styles, they know what would amount to bullying; they say that it is very rare and that adults respond very effectively, should there be any concerns. They feel safe in school and understand, for example, why there is restriction on the use of mobile phones. They say that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities get on well together and that there is no unpleasantness on account of how individuals look or how they present themselves. They are alert to potential risks and know how to look after themselves in the wider community and wider-ranging situations.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and enjoyment of school life is demonstrated by their exceptionally high attendance and punctuality to school. The school is meticulous in its record-keeping of the few individuals who have had the suggestion of a problem in this regard and effective action has been taken.
- Pupils' exceptional personal development is carefully cultivated. Clear messages in assemblies celebrate one another's success. Many Year 6 boys and girls are proud of having reached the top of the 10-metre climbing wall. High expectations of achievement, conduct and care for others are implicit in all that the school does.

The leadership and management**Good**

- The school has improved dramatically over the last few years. It was satisfactory at the last inspection, which in turn was an improvement on the previous position. The headteacher, ably assisted by the senior team, has a shrewd picture of the strengths in the school and the things that need further development. Senior staff consider that the school is good and know that there is further to go in raising pupils' achievement. Morale is high in the school and there is a united commitment to improvement. The school has the strong support of parents.
- The school is scrupulous in keeping detailed records of pupils' progress and analysing it in relation to gender, entitlement to earmarked funding and indications that pupils might be vulnerable because of their circumstances. This provides the means of ensuring that all classes, and individuals within them, have an equal opportunity for success.
- Teachers welcome observation of lessons and checks on their marking by senior staff and the local authority. There are records of subsequent detailed advice and, where appropriate, targets for improvement. Those who co-ordinate the teaching of literacy, numeracy and provision for pupils who need support for their learning have been instrumental in providing training and guidance for colleagues. Thus, teaching has improved, and that has raised achievement.
- The range of experiences within school and opportunities beyond, particularly with residential visits, sporting activities and musical ventures, contribute to its vibrant atmosphere. Pupils develop intellectual curiosity and strive for excellence. They value the diversity that pupils with different backgrounds bring to the school. They learn how to learn and grow up well, not by chance but as a result of the aspiration and vigilance with which the school is led and managed.
- The local authority has been skilful in its support for the school's improvement. Its steadfast support has been a significant factor with the headway that has been made.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been unwavering in the support and challenge that it has provided for the school's improvement. It ensures that its statutory duties are attended to rigorously. Safeguarding policies and practice meet requirements and pupil premium funding is applied in a well-considered and effective way. The headteacher's work is managed sensitively but with appropriately high expectations, and governors ensure that the pay arrangements for staff are in keeping with the quality of the work they do. Governors are suitably trained. They recognise that there are things yet to be done to raise the school's effectiveness to outstanding and are mindful of the challenges of ensuring high quality provision from an increasingly tight budget.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 104522 |
| Local authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 404948 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 318 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Rafferty |
| Headteacher | Jonathan McCausland |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 November 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0151 7242941 |
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