

Four Oaks Primary School

39 Davy Street, Liverpool, L5 1XP

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2013

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 a very happy and caring school. Pupils thrive within a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Achievement has improved since the last inspection. Most pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and standards have risen at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers know the pupils well. They praise and encourage them, make lessons interesting and fun, and pupils are eager to learn.
- Pupils are proud of their school, behave well and feel safe. They respect one another and are keen to help and take responsibility.
- The curriculum is well organised. As well as a clear focus on developing pupils' basic skills, it provides a range of rich experiences, which contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Her drive and determination have led to better teaching and improvements in pupils' achievement over the past two years. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Governors are very supportive. They ask challenging questions because they believe that nothing but the best is good enough for the pupils. The governing body has, therefore, helped the school to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding and the best practice seen is not consistent across the school.
- Although pupils' progress in writing is good, standards in writing remain lower than those in reading and mathematics in both Key Stages 1 and 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons, including five joint lesson observations with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and observed the teaching of early reading skills. They also looked at examples of pupils' work to get a view of teaching and progress over time.
- Discussions took place with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of five responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school's analysis of the most recent parent surveys carried out by the school, one letter from a parent and six staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including data on pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and its development planning, records of the quality of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documentation in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Choi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Approximately half of the pupils in the school are supported through the pupil premium, which is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school houses a specially resourced provision for up to twenty pupils with special educational needs from across the city, who are taught within the school's Language Resource Bases. Currently there are fifteen pupils registered within the provision, from the Reception class to Year 6, all of whom have speech, language and communication needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school was opened in 2010, following the merging of two schools. It moved into new, purpose-built accommodation in May 2012.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning before school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all good or outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - lessons always move quickly enough to keep pupils interested
 - activities are always closely matched to the different needs and abilities of all the pupils
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and that more-able pupils, in particular, are challenged effectively to develop their skills at higher levels
 - regular opportunities continue to be provided to share outstanding aspects of teaching.
- Accelerate progress in writing for all groups of pupils in order to raise standards further, by:
 - making the best use of opportunities to develop specific writing skills in other subjects
 - ensuring that marking consistently shows pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their writing and that they are given regular opportunities to respond to written comments
 - giving pupils more opportunities to talk to each other in order to provide a starting point for their writing
 - having high expectations of the standards of presentation and handwriting in pupils' written work in all classes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typically expected for their age. From these very low starting points, most pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are improving steadily, although they remain below national expectations. The school recognises the need to continue to accelerate progress in order to make up for past underachievement.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Lively resources and well planned activities, both indoors and out, mean they are excited and eager to learn. Children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing and to share and take turns as they play.
- Early reading skills are taught well. Younger children enjoy matching letters stuck on each other's backs and picking letters out of water to make words. By Years 1 and 2, they use their understanding of letters and sounds to build unfamiliar words. Older pupils enjoy reading and understand its purpose as an essential life skill. They talk about books they have read, and about how much they read during their lessons, including when doing research on the internet.
- Progress in writing has improved, but pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2 do less well than in reading and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows specific writing skills are not always being practised when they write in other subjects.
- The school has made good use of the pupil premium funding to provide additional staffing and resources, including information and communication technology equipment. The breakfast club and popular 'deli bar' at lunchtime mean pupils are better prepared for learning. Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, make similar progress to other pupils and they reach similar standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- There is a range of special programmes to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, therefore, make good progress.
- Pupils in the Language Resource Bases have a range of complex needs. Although they make less progress overall than pupils with special educational needs in the rest of the school, the majority of them make good progress towards their individual targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school and some is outstanding. Teachers know pupils well and have good relationships with them. They make it clear to pupils just what they are expected to learn and pupils find lessons relevant and interesting. Teaching assistants play an active part in lessons and their support for particular pupils helps them to make progress. Teaching in the Language Resource Bases is good and the resources used are tailored specifically to the needs of those pupils who are taught in this unit.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers expect the most of all pupils. They plan activities and use resources which are just right for the needs and abilities of different pupils. There was a buzz of activity as pupils in Year 1 invented characters for a story. Some worked on initial sounds, others talked about or drew their ideas, while the more-able pupils produced written story plans. However, sometimes more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in lessons to develop their skills at a higher level, and other pupils are given tasks which are too hard.
- The best lessons move along quickly and pupils are actively involved at all stages. Teachers draw out pupils' ideas, check their understanding and help them improve their work through the questions they ask. Year 5 pupils deepened their understanding of how to solve word problems in mathematics through having opportunities to discuss processes and clarify their thoughts. However, in those lessons where teaching still requires improvement, the pace is slower and

pupils lose interest.

- Where pupils are given opportunities to rehearse orally what they are going to write, they make better progress. Year 4 pupils were finding it hard to start writing a diary entry, but became enthusiastic and wrote at length, once they had talked it through. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to use talk to stimulate their writing.
- Although some marking is helpful to pupils, it does not always show them exactly what they need to do to improve their writing. They do not always have time to respond to written comments. There is insufficient attention to improving pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Throughout the school, good use is made of interactive 'working walls' in both English and mathematics. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how helpful they find them when they need to check their understanding or get ideas for their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very polite, welcoming and friendly. Pupils feel respected and valued, and in turn, respect and value those around them. They love the new building and equipment and behave well around the school.
- Pupils enjoy positions of responsibility. Older pupils provide good role models for younger pupils and are keen to look after them. Pupils from the Language Resource Bases integrate seamlessly into the life of the school.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and have good attitudes to learning. However, some of them do not behave so well when the pace of lessons is slow, or activities are not so well matched to their needs and they lose interest.
- Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. When they do occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. Staff are always around and pupils enjoy opportunities to talk to them. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in situations beyond school, including when using the internet. Community police officers are regular visitors to the school and help pupils deal with safety issues which might arise when they are out and about in the local area.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly over the past two years, largely due to the relentless efforts of the learning mentor. Rewards for good or improved attendance are extremely popular. 'Attendance surgeries' provide parents with opportunities to resolve difficulties relating to their children's attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high ambitions for the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and governing body. Decisive actions have led to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. There have been several changes to staffing. There is now a cohesive staff team who are committed to giving all pupils the best possible opportunities.
- Senior leaders are accurate and honest in their judgements about the school. They know what still needs to be done and have set appropriate priorities to improve the school further.
- Leaders share a determination to develop teachers' skills in order to improve teaching further. They regularly check the quality of teaching in lessons and pupils' work and provide guidance to teachers on how to improve their teaching. This has helped to eliminate weak teaching. High quality training is provided to meet whole-school and individual teacher's needs.
- The progress of individual pupils is tracked closely by leaders and teachers. Assessment data is used well to ensure that all groups of pupils are doing equally well.
- The curriculum is well organised for all groups of pupils. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It provides a broad range of activities which enrich

pupils' experiences both within and outside school. Pupils use their skills in information and communication technology particularly well. The 4D room brings different environments to life for the pupils and inspires their learning.

- Relationships with most parents are positive and the school works hard to involve them as part of the community through popular activities such as Zumba dancing and fitness training. Courses help them develop their own skills in reading, mathematics and computing so that they are better able to support their children's learning.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided good support which has contributed to school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know the school well and are very involved in school life. They are committed to making sure all pupils get the best possible opportunities and ask challenging questions if they feel pupils are not doing well enough. They have a good understanding of the school's performance data and of the quality of teaching and have not been afraid to make difficult decisions to tackle underperformance. They are kept well informed about the outcomes of staff performance management and decisions relating to pay progression. They are determined that there will be value for money and make sure that additional staffing and equipment funded through the pupil premium has a positive impact on eligible pupils' achievement.

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	131313
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	406427

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nikki Smith
Headteacher	Sara Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2011
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