

Lord Street Primary School

Lord Street, Horwich, Bolton, Lancashire, BL6 7AL

Inspection dates 21–22 February 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 much-improved school. Pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Most teaching is good and pupils enjoy school. Reading is taught most effectively and standards are getting close to above average.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Overall, pupils behave well, especially on the very small playground. They say they feel safe and are confident that staff are available if they need help.
- Effective leadership has enabled the school to improve despite staff changes. The school has a good understanding of how well it is performing. Prompt actions tackle weaknesses effectively and teaching and achievement are improving.
- Governance is effective and has ensured financial stability for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies in teaching and not enough is outstanding. Lessons are not always sufficiently brisk and challenging. Pupils are not always encouraged to work independently or reminded how to improve their work.
- The outdoor space for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is small. Resources are not all of a good quality and when too many activities are provided it restricts opportunities for adults to interact with children.
- Aspects of writing and mathematics are not always high enough. These include handwriting, punctuation and the use of number skills to solve problems.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils from Years 2 and 6 read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with a focus on writing and mathematics in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's plan for future development, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website.
- The views of 14 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents shared their views about the school by letter and discussion at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed 18 returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gillian Hunter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and virtually every pupil speaks English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- The school has had several staffing changes since the previous inspection and currently three members of staff are absent on maternity leave.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate of pupils' progress, especially in writing and mathematics, to outstanding by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects and improving their confidence when applying their skills to solve problems
 - improving consistency in handwriting and accuracy in the use of punctuation
 - checking that resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage are always of a good quality and restricting the number of activities so that staff have more time to interact with children
 - ensuring all lessons go at a brisk pace and that tasks are always set at the right level
 - making sure pupils have enough opportunities to work independently and are constantly reminded how to improve, especially in their basic literacy skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and abilities that are generally lower than those seen for this age, especially in communication, language and social skills. Progress is good and often better in the weaker aspects because of the extra attention these receive. Role play and collaboration are key features of the day. Attainment is rising and many now reach the level expected of their age.
- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. Attainment is average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and reflects a rising trend throughout the school. Results of national tests support this rise except for Year 6 in 2012 which dipped below average in mathematics. These pupils underachieved due to weaker teaching as they moved through Key Stage 2. Although their learning accelerated in Year 6, it was not enough to close the gaps in their skills.
- Action to raise attainment includes two teachers taking Year 6 every morning. These small classes have proved very beneficial. More are at the level expected for their age and an increasing number reach beyond this.
- Reading is a strength. Letters and sounds are taught well. The results of the Year 1 national reading assessment were above average. Pupils in Year 6 read confidently and with understanding. They enjoy reading from a wide range of texts, with science fiction being popular.
- Writing is average and pupils understand how to write in different styles. In Year 6 most present their work well but some pupils in Year 6 and other classes do not always write neatly or use punctuation correctly.
- Books show that most pupils learn their basic numeracy skills well. However, some lack confidence when choosing different methods for their calculations or solving problems. Nevertheless, improvement is very secure and in Year 6 there are some highly skilled mathematicians.
- In the afternoon every corner of the school is used for extra reading help, social skills and other additional activities. All are practical and enjoyed by pupils. These interventions contribute to the good progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Although some parents felt more help was needed, others wrote to inspectors to express their delight in the support provided.
- The pupil premium contributes to these extra activities. The group eligible for this funding includes those known to be eligible for free school meals. These pupils make good progress, the same as other pupils in the school. Their attainment is in line with the national average, although fewer reach higher levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some outstanding teaching was observed. This enables pupils to make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. Enjoyment is paramount. In the space rocket children talk eagerly about their journey. Adults intervene effectively in the garden centre to extend language skills. Too many resources, some not very inspiring, make the small space, especially outdoors, seem cramped. It is then difficult for staff to keep an eye on learning, for example to check that children interact well during snack time.
- Throughout the school, learning takes place in an orderly atmosphere. This is because staff manage pupils well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to ask probing questions. They challenge pupils to extend their knowledge. For example, in Year 3 the teacher insisted pupils use similes to improve their work.
- In the very best lessons the pace is brisk with clear explanations of what is expected. For

example, when planning a story pupils were reminded a plan is just 'to jog your memory'. This was not the case in other lessons when pupils spent too long writing their plans in detail and then repeating sentences in the story.

- In effective lessons, especially in Year 6, the match of work is just right including the challenge for the more able. On occasions tasks are either too easy or too hard, or pupils rely too much on the teacher and this restricts their independent skills and progress.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively. They often lead small groups, showing good subject knowledge and an understanding of how to encourage pupils.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils read regularly to an adult. This ensures accurate monitoring of progress and provision of extra help. Expectations of pupils' handwriting are not always high enough. Pupils often assess their own work using check lists. This encourages them to reflect and improve but limits the prompts they receive from teachers about the importance of accurate punctuation.
- Basic numeracy skills are taught successfully and often include practical resources to help those who are struggling. Not enough opportunities are provided to use these skills in everyday situations across other subjects, however.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- New systems to manage pupils' behaviour are most effective. Pupils are awarded 'caught in the act' points for positive behaviour which they trade in for prizes. They strive to earn rewards and behaviour is good. Although there was some concern from parents about behaviour at play, no problems were observed. Taking into consideration the very small space the pupils play games, share apparatus and enjoy themselves.
- Most pupils show good attitudes to learning, although at times more work could be completed and it could be neater. This often links to teaching that does not sustain their interest.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are aware of dangers and how to avoid them. They recognise there are different types of bullying and that this has reduced in school, although some name-calling upsets others. They feel help is available if needed.
- Attendance was an issue at the previous inspection. More rigorous systems and the appointment of a learning mentor have raised this to average.
- Year 6 pupils are very sensible and, especially, fulfil roles to help younger pupils. Older pupils planned this quotation for the report: 'This is a friendly school; we enjoy lessons and are kind, especially to newcomers'.

The leadership and management are good

- Effective leadership has led to improvement despite ongoing staffing difficulties. Although changes mean some leadership roles are not fully established, key subjects are managed successfully. Effective actions have raised the school from satisfactory to good.
- The school has an accurate view of performance and priorities. Actions are clear, either in the school's improvement plan or as a target for staff. Impact is evident in the successful response to the dip in mathematics last year.
- Teaching is checked regularly. Although monitoring could identify more precisely strengths and areas to improve, it does provide staff with stepping stones to improve. Only minor variations remain which are linked to some extent to the length of time staff have been in school.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress is good and staff meet to identify any concerns. Underachievement is now spotted promptly and action taken. This reflects the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity and ensures there is no discrimination.
- Staff training is linked to priorities. For example, training in writing has raised attainment and

teachers' understanding of the standards pupils are achieving.

- Staff have targets linked to pupils' progress and priorities. Salary awards are only appointed when these are achieved.
 - The curriculum focuses on pupils' needs. Themed days often include health issues which prepare pupils well for the future. Visits and visitors broaden their understanding of the world and provide memorable experiences. Basic skills are covered well, although problem solving in mathematics is not always promoted in other subjects. Clubs and trips are a highlight for many. These help promote effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Links with the local authority are effective. Training and evaluations are carried out as required.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors review reports, are linked to subjects and hold in-depth meetings with pupils. As a result, they know what is happening in school. They review data and ask questions if they are concerned. They challenged the dip in mathematics and agreed the new arrangements for smaller groups in Year 6. Through visiting lessons and reviewing books they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They know that weaker teaching has been eradicated. Governors, with help from the local authority, set challenging targets for the headteacher and check that all staff earn salary awards. Astute spending, including the use of the pupil premium, has led to a balanced budget and money spent for the benefit of those for whom it is allocated. The governing body fulfils statutory duties, particularly ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
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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	105179
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	400763

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Olive Fairhurst
Headteacher	Andy Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2010
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