

Litherland Moss Primary School

Moss Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside, L21 7NW

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Litherland Moss is a good school which makes a positive difference to pupils' lives and their achievement. Pupils whose backgrounds and circumstances make them more vulnerable are very well supported and achieve well.
- From very low starting points, most groups of pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 6, almost every pupil attains the expected Level 4 in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is good because staff have high expectations of pupils; they tackle underachievement, make sure lessons are active and practical and there is a high priority on every pupil being able to read.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly and is now close to the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved. Pupils are polite, friendly and lessons are no longer disrupted. Systems to manage behaviour have worked.
- Pupils feel safe, bullying is rare and they have a good understanding of how to avoid dangers such as when using the internet.
- The main reason for the school's significant improvement is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who has a relentless focus on making sure every child succeeds.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully tackled underperformance wherever it lies in the school.
- Governors are knowledgeable, committed and well trained. They provide the support, challenge and oversight that the school needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standard of pupils' writing has improved significantly but is not as high as it could be. The quality of pupils' work in English, in some classes, is better than it is in subjects such as history, geography and science.
- In some classes, there is too much focus on the activity rather than on what each pupil needs to do next to improve his or her writing.
- The content of what pupils study in the different subjects (the curriculum) such as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), history, geography, music and science is not as extensive as it could be.
- The leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is at an early stage and is not yet leading to raised standards in those subjects.

Information about this inspection

- I observed five lessons, one in each class, taught by each of the five teachers. I also observed a lesson in Nursery and Reception with some children in teacher-led mathematics activities and some children in teacher-led phonics activities (letters and the sounds they represent).
- In addition to looking at pupils' work, I met three groups of pupils to find out their views about the school. I heard four pupils read and took account of the school's surveys of pupils' views over the last two years.
- Although there were only six responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), which is not enough to be considered as part of this inspection, I took into account the 15 responses to the school's survey of parents and carers.
- I took into account the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the views of staff given during discussions. I met with the leader for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, with senior leaders and with staff responsible for behaviour and attendance.
- The school presented a range of documentation for me to consider, including the latest data about how well pupils are achieving and latest attendance and exclusion figures. I met with two members of the governing body and with representatives of the local authority.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- At the previous inspection in May 2012, the school was judged to be inadequate because it was significantly underperforming compared to other schools. It was given a notice to improve.
- Litherland Moss is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The pupil premium is money provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those that are in care and looked after by the local authority, and those who are in families where a parent is a member of the armed forces. The proportion of pupils supported by this fund is more than double the national average.
- Most pupils are White British and a greater proportion than average arrive or leave school partway through their education.
- When pupils are initially identified as possibly having a special educational need, they are supported through the school's internal actions; this stage is called school action. The proportion of pupils at this stage is similar to the national average. If specialist support or teaching is needed, usually from outside the school, this stage is called school action plus. The proportion of pupils supported at this stage, because they have a disability or special educational needs, is more than double the national average.
- At the time of the inspection, no pupil was educated off-site in alternative provision.
- The school governors and headteacher also manage the children's centre and the after-school and breakfast clubs.
- The deputy headteacher started at Easter and the school is looking to recruit two teachers to start in September to replace two teachers who retired earlier in the year.
- The school meets the floor standards, which are the minimum level of attainment and progress of pupils expected by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing by:
 - making sure teachers focus in all lessons on guiding pupils to the next step in their writing
 - making sure the quality of pupils' work in all subjects matches that of their work in English.
- Extend the curriculum to ensure each subject meets pupils' needs very well and provides rich experiences by:
 - making sure all subject leaders monitor pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the curriculum and take effective action to raise standards in those subjects
 - extending provision for personal, social, health and economic education to give pupils a wider knowledge about different cultures and to be well prepared for their future lives in Britain.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils enter the Nursery with skills and levels of development that are much lower than those typical for three- and four-year-olds. Children's achievement is improving quickly thanks, in part, to improvements made by the newly appointed deputy headteacher.
- Reading is a strength of the school with very few pupils not reading at the level expected for their age. In one session, a group of Reception children confidently read through their phonics sounds then successfully worked out how to read words such as 'bonfire', 'conspire' and 'inspire'. They made good gains in their ability to read words. In another group, pupils successfully read, understood and located contractions such as 'I'll', 'I've', 'I'm' in their reading books.
- Pupils are grouped according to their phonic ability. They follow a commercial scheme and make fast gains in their ability to read, so that by the end of Year 2 they have caught up ground and match the attainment of pupils nationally.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) read frequently and widely a range of books. One pupil for example, in Year 5, successfully read and understood a version of *The Tempest* written by Shakespeare and could talk about a range of authors. In 2012 every pupil attained Level 4 in reading, which is outstanding given their starting points.
- Although pupils make good progress in their writing, the standard of their work is not always as high as it could be and very few pupils attain the higher levels for their age. In some classes such as Year 1, Year 2 and Years 5 and 6, the quality of pupils' topic work such as in history, geography, science and religious education (RE) matched the good work they produced in English. The quality of pupils' writing compared well, which means they continued developing their writing skills across all subjects in the curriculum. However, in some classes, the work in English is much better than the work in other subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics; standards by the end of Year 6 are rising and are close to the national average. In a Year 1 class, pupils made good gains in their ability to estimate length in centimetres because of good teaching. They built on their skills to use a ruler accurately to measure.
- Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs get a very good deal. There are no excuses, staff expectations for this group's achievement are high and the small group teaching is effective. The relentless focus on pupils being able to read whether they have special educational needs or not, is paying dividends.
- Governors have approved the use of the pupil premium funding to buy in a specialist teacher for one afternoon each week; resources for the phonics and reading schemes; resources for the homework and reading clubs; and additional staffing for small-group teaching. As a result, pupils who are supported by the pupil premium attain well at Litherland and make very good progress. In 2012, for example, in English there was no difference between standards for this group compared with those who are not known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupil premium pupils' attainment in mathematics was approximately half a year behind that of other pupils in the school but this gap is closing rapidly.
- Pupils who are in care and looked after by the local authority achieve particularly well. They are, in addition to being very well cared for, targeted by staff to get the best teaching possible so that they can achieve as well as other pupils. Over the last few years, this group of pupils have made outstanding progress.
- Other groups of pupils also achieve well. Boys, for example, attain higher than boys nationally and make good progress. Some of this is to do with receiving well-crafted and targeted teaching. There is a reading project, for example, targeting texts that many boys are interested in, which is having a significant impact on raising boys' standards.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In a mathematics session in the Nursery, children made rapid progress in their understanding of number and basic calculations. The teacher involved pupils in singing songs, counting, playing games and in simple calculations. For example, they worked out and counted how many monkeys were left after some were eaten by a crocodile. They were enthused and were confident at working with numbers. This lesson typifies the good teaching in the school.
- Most teachers involve pupils throughout the lesson in purposeful activities that are well matched to what pupils should learn next. In lessons, pupils write on individual whiteboards, talk and discuss answers with partners and they are clear about what they should be learning and how to improve their work. In one lesson for example, a teacher worked with a group discussing alliteration and other forms of language such as similes. She referred to pupils' individual targets to make sure each knew what to do to improve.
- The teaching of writing is not as good as that of reading. This, in part, is because in some lessons the focus is on completing styles of writing rather than on the next step pupils need to take to improve their sentences and paragraphs. It is also because pupils have to wait until a Friday to complete longer pieces of writing. In some classes, for example Reception, Year 3 and 4, pupils' writing is not as good as it is in other subjects such as history and geography.
- In the better lessons, teachers use questions well to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding, to identify any errors or misunderstanding, and to deepen pupils' thinking. In a mathematics lesson for example, the teacher skilfully used pupils' mistakes when measuring the sides of a shape as a teaching point to help them make progress. In a few lessons however, pupils, particularly the more-able, have few chances to explain their ideas and their thinking, and the questions asked by the teacher are too easy. This hinders a few more-able pupils from making good progress.
- Most teachers monitored pupils' learning and used teaching assistants and other adults well. In an English lesson for example, the teacher moved around each group of pupils to monitor their learning and to guide them to the next stage of progression. While she did this, the teaching assistant moved between the remaining groups to check on learning and ask good questions to deepen pupils' thinking and understanding.
- Although the majority of staff have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, some teachers and assistants make errors. The most common of these are errors in standard spoken English such as 'You are sat', 'You are gunna'. In one lesson the teacher introduced a mathematical error, which resulted in a misconception for the class.
- Pupils said their lessons have improved and they are fun. They said they are challenged, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and homework helps them to progress.
- Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are taught well. They are taught frequently by teachers and by specialists rather than being taught all day by teaching assistants. One of the main reasons for pupils' good progress is that staff have high expectations and will not settle for this group of pupils having lower standards than others in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and carers and staff all agree that behaviour has improved significantly and is now good. They strongly agreed that poor behaviour is managed well through effective rewards and sanctions.
- Teachers use a range of effective behaviour management strategies such as:
 - modelling and demonstrating to pupils how to respect others and speak politely
 - telling pupils about how to show good behaviour
 - making sure pupils are involved throughout the lesson in exciting activities
 - using non-verbal and other signals to re-direct pupils whose attention wanders
 - monitoring behaviour throughout the lesson.
- Few lessons are disrupted because of pupils' low-level chatter or poor behaviour. Pupils respond

well to teachers, students, supply teachers, teaching assistants and support staff, which means the school is quiet, orderly and a pleasant place to learn.

- Incidents of poor behaviour around the school have reduced significantly in the last two years. The number of exclusions in the past has been very high but these have reduced significantly this year.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are monitored very well. For example, a member of staff observes play and lunch times and creates a report which identifies aspects of break time and pupils' behaviour that can be improved. This monitoring leads to termly improvements.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They said that racism is rare as are other forms of prejudice-based language such as calling people names if they are disabled or if they have special educational needs. A few pupils, however, said that the term 'gay' is sometimes used in school to mean something that is not very good or 'rubbish', and had a less than good understanding about homophobia and transphobia.
- Pupils have a good understanding of common dangers, like what to avoid when using modern technology such as text messaging and using the internet. They also have a good understanding of stranger danger, water and fire safety, and personal safety.
- Attendance has risen significantly. For many years it was below the national average, but for the first time it is over 95% and broadly average. The number of pupils absent for too much time has reduced significantly.

The leadership and management are good

- The main reason why the school has improved significantly in the last year is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She is relentless in tackling underperformance wherever it lies, yet does so while maintaining the approval and high morale of the staff. Key to her success is having high expectations and the vision that the pupils and parents of Litherland deserve the best.
- The quality of leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of an experienced, highly knowledgeable and effective deputy headteacher. Leaders for mathematics and English are highly effective in improving standards in their subjects. As a team, they are able to identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievement by analysing pupils' work, observing lessons and by analysing data from pupils' assessments.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching thoroughly through observations of lessons, checking pupils' work and by measuring progress through a good tracking system. They identify actions for improvement that are linked to staff meetings or training for individual teachers. Training also sometimes involves working with local partner schools, with local authority advisors or watching other good practice in the school. The training has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching in most classes.
- Senior leaders and governors have made significant improvements to attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress, standards and to teaching. These improvements, alongside senior leaders' effective improvement plans and monitoring of the school's work, indicate good capacity to improve. Leadership and capacity are not outstanding, however, because the leadership of other curriculum subjects is less well developed. This means subject leaders for music, history, design and technology, and geography are not having the impact they should in improving standards and the curriculum in the subjects they lead.
- The curriculum is good and it meets pupils' needs. There is an appropriate focus on English and mathematics and the curriculum includes trips, visits, listening to visiting speakers, theme weeks and after-school clubs. Pupils were highly positive about the range of opportunities they have, which means they were enthusiastic about their work in mathematics, English and history.
- As you walk down the 'junior' corridor, two outstanding displays reflect good elements of the curriculum. One is a display relating to work around Brazil and the Amazon. As you walk past, you press a sound button to get the sounds of the Amazon, which then fill the corridor as you

look at the very good artwork relating to Brazil. Similarly, on the wall with writing about the Second World War, if you hit the button the sounds of an air raid fill the corridor. This, alongside the life-size models of soldiers, the sand bags and the artwork, gives a very good snap shot of the pupils' studies about the war.

- The curriculum is not outstanding, however, because the breadth of study in each subject is not extensive enough. In music, for example, the predominant feature in Key Stage 2 is guitar lessons rather than studying a wide range of instruments. Pupils pick up knowledge and understanding about different cultures and the curriculum is good at developing their social, moral and spiritual skills. However, pupils do not have an extensive understanding about different religions, ethnicities, sexualities and cultures to take their place in modern Britain.
 - Litherland is a highly inclusive school in which everyone thrives and is welcomed. The gaps in achievement between groups of pupils are closing rapidly or are very small. Some of the gaps buck the national trend because boys often achieve better than girls and pupils who are supported by the pupil premium often do better than other pupils. All pupils are challenged and supported. Staff work well with pupils who are transgendered, those that are looked after by the local authority and those whose home circumstances make them vulnerable.
 - There are very strong systems in place to safeguard and protect pupils. Alongside the vetting of staff and governors to make sure they can work with pupils, there are very good procedures for child protection. Staff take seriously any potential barriers to pupils' progress and take all the necessary steps to make sure the barriers are broken down. Staff are trained in First Aid and termly audits of accidents and incidents are effective in showing any patterns.
 - **The governance of the school is good:**
 - Over the last year, the headteacher and governors have transformed their approach to managing the performance of staff. There is now a clear link between rewarding teachers with pay rises and their good performance as teachers. The good quality of teaching and pupils' good achievement now indicate that the staff are providing good value for money. There is also a clear link between teachers' targets for improvement and the school's improvement plans.
 - Governors have used the budget wisely to make sure there is enough of a surplus each year but also that resources are linked clearly to raising standards and improving teaching.
 - Governors are knowledgeable and well trained and have high expectations for the school. One commented, 'I want to make Litherland Moss the best school in Sefton.' They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are able to challenge the senior leaders to improve weaknesses because they have a good knowledge of national and local data about standards and progress.
 - The governing body meets most of its statutory duties well but needs to check the school's website and ensure all its policies meet the latest regulations.
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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	104875
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	408859

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Sweeney
Headteacher	Sarah Greer
Date of previous school inspection	30 May 2012
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