

Flixton Junior School

Delamere Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester, M41 5QL

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Not enough teaching is good or better. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers' expectations are insufficiently high to help able pupils to always make the progress of which they are capable. Lessons are not always planned carefully enough to match pupils' different learning needs.
- Pupils' basic skills are not developed sufficiently well in all subject areas. Skills they have learned in small group work are not always built upon in class.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.
- The school's view of its performance is not entirely accurate. This is because there has been insufficient rigour when monitoring the quality of teaching.
- The initiatives introduced by leaders and managers to halt the decline in standards have not yet been robustly evaluated to measure their impact upon pupils' achievement.
- New leaders and managers have not yet fully developed their management skills and do not always have sufficient opportunities to contribute to school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors are increasingly holding the school to account and have made sure that they have the skills to do this effectively
- The headteacher has introduced a new system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, which is providing leaders and managers with more accurate information about pupils' progress.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. They are confident, polite, enjoy coming to school and show respect and tolerance for others.
- There are some interesting partnerships with other schools that extend pupils knowledge of the wider world.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, this helps to ensure a harmonious, cohesive community.
- Many enrichment activities support the curriculum and motivate and encourage pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons. Two lessons were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors also observed some intervention work with small groups of pupils, listened to pupils read in every year group.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils individually or in groups, in lessons and in during playtimes and lunch breaks. They also had a formal discussion with pupils. Pupils' work was looked at in lessons and in English, mathematics and topic books.
- They considered a wide range of documents linked with safeguarding, pupils' progress and school policy, as well as information linked to how the school checks on its own progress.
- They examined records of lesson observations and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- They took account of parents' views through informal discussions, letters and 37 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View). Additionally, the results of a school questionnaire were also considered. They also studied 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rosemary Batty, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic heritages is small.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and children from service families, is below average.
- 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 so that it is consistently good or better and promotes good progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - making certain that the information from the school's new assessment system is used to plan lessons where the work is carefully matched to pupils' different capabilities
 - making sure that learning is checked during lessons and those pupils that are struggling are quickly identified and their needs are quickly addressed.
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils understand what they must do next and giving pupils time to respond to this guidance.
 - making certain that basic skills are further developed through work in a range of subjects including topic work, so that pupils become more proficient and independent learners
 - ensuring that the gains that pupils make when working in small groups are built upon during whole class work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - monitoring teaching and learning in lessons with greater rigour to make sure that all pupils make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that all leaders have sufficient skills and the opportunity to contribute effectively towards school improvements that have a positive impact upon pupils' achievement
 - making certain that the impact of new initiatives is robustly monitored.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils enter Year 3 with good levels of attainment and leave at the end of Year 6 with similarly above average attainment. However, since the last inspection, levels of attainment have declined. In 2012, not enough pupils reached the higher levels of which they were capable.
- Pupils' achievement and progress vary in different classes because of the inconsistent quality of teaching. For example, pupils get off to a slow start in Year 3 but make better progress in Year 6.
- Some pupils do not always make the progress expected of them in writing and mathematics. This particularly applies to some more-able pupils and those who find learning more difficult. That said, some pupils in the current Year 6 have been entered for the higher Level 6 paper in mathematics.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium have lower attainment than similar pupils nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics. They also make less progress than their peers in school. Consequently by the end Year 6, pupils who are known to be eligible for free meals are over a year and half behind other pupils in the school, although the gap in their attainment is closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs attain less well than their peers in school, and nationally, in writing and mathematics, but do well in reading. However, increased support in recent times has shown that pupils are now closer to what might be expected for their age and aptitudes.
- Too many variations in outcomes for different groups of pupils mean that the school's arrangements to promote equality of opportunity are not fully effective.
- Pupils read well throughout the school. They enjoy reading for pleasure and for information. They are able to use a range of strategies to access texts in line with their abilities.
- There are recent signs of improvement to the quality of pupils' writing because of a greater focus on the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to solve problems. However, they do not always have sufficient opportunities to practise these skills further, especially in other subject areas.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school, particularly in writing and mathematics lessons. Teaching over time requires improvement because not enough has been done to quicken the progress of pupils. In the best lessons, pupils learn well and make swift progress. In lessons that are not good, teachers do not always pay enough attention to learners who may be struggling, while they lead work with other groups of pupils in the lesson.
- In some lessons, the activities set are not sufficiently well matched to the range of needs within the class. Therefore, learning time is wasted because the work is too difficult for some pupils yet others can accomplish the work readily without any sense of pace or urgency.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough, especially for more-able pupils. In a mathematics lesson, for example, challenging discussions took place about devising quick methods of calculating perimeter of different shapes. This was highly directed by the teachers and the independent work that followed did not allow pupils to practise that aspect of learning and to make more rapid progress.
- Marking varies in quality. Pupils' work is celebrated, but there are too few specific examples to model how work could be improved. Pupils are not always given time to respond to teachers' marking. Marking in topic work does not build upon pupils' basic skills being mastered in English and mathematics.
- In the lessons where pupils make good progress, this is because teachers provide a range of

opportunities for pupils to work together, discuss work, share ideas and put these ideas into practice.

- Teaching assistants are well deployed in the better lessons because teachers have a clear picture of how this support will improve the learning of pupils and make sure that the support is well targeted.
- Additional support is offered for some pupils who may be finding some work difficult in lessons. However, the knowledge and skills gained in these activities is not always effectively reinforced within the classroom setting.
- Teachers and other adults promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are given opportunities to work together, assess each other's work and participate in a wide range of experiences across the curriculum, which pupils appreciate. This includes residential visits, projects with other schools, gardening, sporting events and the arts.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They are polite, courteous and work in harmony both in formal and unstructured situations. They particularly enjoy cookery and the opportunity to work in their restaurant and other types of enterprise, such as making and selling jam.
- They understand how to keep themselves safe and can explain how school helps them in their understanding of safety. This includes aspects of e-safety.
- Pupils show an awareness of the needs of others. They were keen to explain that, when building a pond in the school grounds, they had to make sure that the bridge spanning it was wide enough for wheelchair access. When they talked of bullying, which is rare, they could explain how the particular needs of some pupils might affect their behaviour at certain points in time.
- The school ethos has strong sense of fairness and equality which permeates all aspects of school life.
- Although behaviour is never less than good, more positive attitudes towards learning are not being fostered as well as they might in lesson time. The work is not difficult enough for some pupils and as a result, they have time to chat when they could be working harder.
- School records show that there are few instances of poor behaviour. When they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and appropriately, because the school's behaviour policy is used consistently.
- Most of the responses in the parents' online survey indicate that pupils' behaviour is good, although there is a minority of parents who believe otherwise. School records indicate that concerns are managed well.
- Attendance continues to remain above average because the school ensures that pupils' attendance is monitored carefully.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders and managers have acted to check the decline in the school's performance but their efforts have had mixed results. This is because the strategies they have employed have not been thought out carefully enough and their impact has not been carefully checked.
- The school's views on its effectiveness are not fully accurate. The school believes that pupils' progress is now better than it was almost a year ago. The school's systems for checking pupils' progress across the school have improved and provide teachers with better information about the pupils' achievements. However, these systems do not always give a clear enough picture of the progress of particular groups of pupils.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and want to improve their practice, though they have not always had sufficient guidance from senior managers. The leadership in subject areas such as English and mathematics, is not always successful because it does not always provide teachers with a

sufficiently clear agenda for improvement. Some senior leaders are new to their roles and have not yet fully developed their leadership skills.

- Leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching over time do not match those of inspectors' observations during the inspection nor do they correlate with the evidence gleaned from samples of pupils' work. This has given an over generous picture of the effectiveness of teaching and its impact upon the progress of pupils. However, senior leaders have undertaken some recent training and the judgements of teaching made during the inspection were more accurate.
- Lesson observations, performance management and professional development activities are undertaken across the school and are linked to teachers' pay. However, they are insufficiently detailed or inter-linked to ensure that they make a focused impact upon raising standards within the school.
- Leaders participate in a range of partnerships with other schools and are prepared to embrace new initiatives, which offer exciting opportunities for pupils, such as a science project with a local secondary academy. However, there is less attention paid to ensuring that pupils practise their basic skills in a range of subjects and are enabled to reach the highest levels of attainment.
- There are many exciting activities that make learning more interesting for pupils. The outdoor environment is used to good effect, for example, when the pupils built an assault course. The school arranges a wide range of visits and extra activities to support topics, such as those to Manchester airport, the Whitworth museum, Stockley Farm, Jodrell Bank, the Science and Industry Museum, 'Crucial Crew' and the Isle of Man residential visit.
- Until recently, the local authority has had a light touch approach towards supporting the school. It has monitored the school during the last few months and agrees that the school requires improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have audited their own skill base and have recruited new governors with suitable expertise to help the governing body improve its performance. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are alert to the inconsistencies in pupils' progress and are determined to improve their achievement. They have asked challenging questions of the school and have started to work in partnership with the local authority to ensure that school improvement takes place. They are aware of variations in the quality of teaching and know that pay should be linked to teachers' performance in the classroom. They are clear about how the additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is spent. Governors have ensured that safeguarding procedures are met.

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	106318
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	411864

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Hamilton-Hall
Headteacher	Jason Redmond
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
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