

Pleasant Street Primary School

Pleasant Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L3 5TS

Inspection dates 4–5 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and use a wide range of strategies to engage and motivate them. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to the national average. Pupils' progress from their various starting points is good in English and mathematics.
- Well tailored support for pupils with special educational needs and those with speech and language difficulties, enables these pupils to make good progress.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and good relationships with each other as well as adults in the school. They feel safe here.
- The school's own evaluation of its work is accurate and based upon the rigorous and frequent analysis of pupils' progress. This information is used well by senior leaders and managers to continue to improve the quality of teaching and pupil achievement
- Excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables them to thrive in a supportive, cohesive learning community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge more-able pupils or to provide less-able pupils with the resources they need to complete tasks without help from adults. Pupils are not always given written guidance about how to improve their work, especially their writing.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language, slows while they are acquiring proficiency in English. Opportunities are sometimes missed to support them in doing this in mainstream classes.
- Subject leaders are not yet fully involved in driving improvement in teaching and learning.
- Attendance is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. Fourteen observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. Meetings were conducted with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and read a range of documents including: the school's own evaluation of its work; improvement plans; pupils' current progress; and policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pleasant Street is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a speech and language resource unit which also provides support for pupils from other schools in the area.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than that found nationally as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Many pupils join and leave the school at other times in the school year rather than the usual times.
- Many pupils speak little or no English when they join the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is lower than average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority and children of service families.
- The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment further and increase the rate of progress in reading and writing, especially for pupils who speak little or no English when they join the school, by:
 - ensuring the good individual support provided for pupils in learning English as an additional language is also offered in lessons
 - improving the arrangements for teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make) so that pupils at the early stages of learning English can make better progress
 - making sure pupils can easily identify and thereby correctly choose books suited to their ability in reading.
- Move teaching from good to outstanding across the school by:
 - making sure that all teachers plan tasks in lessons that precisely meet the needs of all pupils, particularly to provide an appropriate level of challenge for more-able pupils
 - ensuring pupils are always given the right amount of support to be able to complete tasks successfully without help from adults
 - ensuring that pupils are always given precise written feedback about how to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management further by developing the role of subject leaders in driving improvement in teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Improve attendance further by continuing to find ways of working with pupils and families.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in English and mathematics are broadly average when compared to national data. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are rising and progress has quickened. The proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 compare favourably with national figures.
- The progress pupils make as they move through the school sometimes appears uneven, particularly in writing and reading; this is because the progress of a large proportion of pupils who join the school at other than usual times, and who speak little or no English, is slowed while they acquire a working knowledge of the language. Once pupils have acquired knowledge of English, their progress accelerates and is good.
- Many children enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are very low in relation to those typically expected for their age. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in language and communication and their physical development. Nevertheless the majority enter Year 1 with skills that are below those expected for their age.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills as they move through the school. However, pupils who are at the early stages of learning English do not cope as well as they might in applying their knowledge of phonics because their vocabulary is severely limited. As a result, attainment at the end of Year 2 remains below average although it is currently rising.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils read a variety of texts with a good level of fluency and understanding. Most pupils are able to talk in detail about what they have read, empathise with characters in stories and make inferences about the text. Pupils' progress is sometimes hampered when there is too little guidance on their choice of books. As a result, some pupils choose books that are either too difficult or too easy for them to read.
- Achievement in mathematics has also improved recently with most pupils now making more than expected progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers as a result of the extra help they are given.
- The school is providing extra support to pupils eligible for the pupil premium and this has helped these pupils to reach their targets to make the same good progress as their peers. Gaps between the attainments of pupils eligible for free school meals in English and mathematics and their peers have closed.
- Pupils who join the school at times throughout the year other than usual times, settle in quickly and because of the extra help they are given, for example, extra help in class, they are able to join in with activities alongside their peers.
- Pupils from other schools who join the school for a short time to attend the Speech and Language Resource Unit make outstanding progress in developing their speech and language. As a result of the extra help they receive, these pupils make good progress overall from their starting points.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school and some is outstanding.
- Teachers present new ideas clearly and activities are well designed to engage pupils' interests. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils' interest was captured by a story described in pictograms. These pupils worked enthusiastically and with clear enjoyment, to retell the story and to write it down, some with help from teaching assistants or the teacher.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. They ask pupils very searching

questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for less-able pupils to be given extra support to participate confidently in whole class discussions. Conversely, sometimes when pupils are completing tasks, teachers are too quick to expand pupils thinking for them and pupils become too dependent upon direct support from adults.

- In most lessons, activities are well matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. Teachers skilfully adapt their lessons so that any misunderstandings are corrected. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils' progress in completing inverse operations to solve word problems was closely monitored. Those who completed tasks confidently were encouraged to try more complex ones. As a result, they made good progress. However, on occasions, opportunities are missed to provide this high level of challenge.
- Pupils often make the best progress when they are given the opportunity to work with a partner or in small groups to explore ideas and solve problems. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils worked confidently with a partner to retell the story of *Peter and the Wolf* by putting visual cues in the correct order.
- The teaching of reading is systematic and consistent across the school. Overall, the teaching of phonics is having a positive impact upon the quality of pupils' writing and upon their reading skills. Younger pupils are eager to show off their writing and all pupils are excited about reading and say how much they enjoy it.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English have good one-to-one support. However, this is not always effectively followed up in whole class activities which means these pupils sometimes struggle to participate fully in activities alongside their peers. Similarly, these pupils sometimes have difficulty applying what they have learned in phonics lessons because their vocabulary is too restricted.
- Pupils' work is usually marked regularly and there are instances of best practice within the school. However, marking does not always give pupils the precise guidance they need to improve, particularly in their writing. In some classes, marking does not always pick up errors in spelling so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. In some classes, pupils respond to teachers' comments and improve upon the work they have done although they are not always given sufficient time to consider and respond to teachers' comments.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding. Where pupils are given the opportunity to work together to solve problems or explore their ideas, they do so sensibly. The school's celebration of the many different cultures represented in the school is exemplified in their tapestry *A World in One School*. This significantly increases pupils' understanding, respect and appreciation of cultures other than their own.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other; they work and play very well together. The school is a harmonious community where the wide range of different cultures is celebrated and valued. As a result, pupils new to the school settle in quickly. Pupils support each other well, take responsibility very seriously and are proud of their contribution to the school, for example, as playground buddies.
- There is no disruption to lessons and pupils work responsibly and with enthusiasm, especially when given the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively. Pupils listen attentively to others and respect each other's views.
- Pupils have very good relationships with adults, feel safe and are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware of the different forms of bullying, such as name-calling and cyber-bullying and know how to deal with it. Play leaders actively help their peers at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport,

that are provided.

- Although attendance is below average it has improved over the last three years and persistent absence has decreased. This is because of the good work the school is doing in encouraging attendance and pursuing those families whose children do not attend regularly enough.
- Pupils who may have challenging behaviour are supported effectively to make good choices and, as a result, incidents of poor behaviour are very rare.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy, provides very clear direction. Her unwavering commitment to continuous improvement is clearly communicated to the wider school community. They both have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what could be improved further. There are detailed action plans focused on raising attainment and on improving teaching and learning. Issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Teaching and learning is closely monitored by senior leaders. Teachers new to the school are effectively supported.
- The detailed analysis of pupils' progress triggers appropriate interventions for pupils and training for staff. A comprehensive system of appraisal and performance management has been adopted, which is linked to teachers' pay scales. Teachers are positive about how they are helped to improve and provided with appropriate training.
- Some subject leaders are at the early stages of developing their roles and are not yet fully involved in checking the school's performance and in holding teachers to account. This is a key reason why teaching is good but not yet outstanding.
- Safeguarding meets government requirements.
- The school works very effectively with local agencies, the local network of schools and with parents to ensure that all pupils settle well to learning. The school promotes equal opportunities very effectively and all pupils do well.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well. It is effectively adapted for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of activities and visits, including residential visits to Lockerbie and Crosby Hall. The school takes full advantage of its location in the city centre to organise excursions to local museums, galleries, parks and places of worship. These opportunities increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local environment and culture as well as developing their language skills. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has worked effectively with the school to improve achievement in mathematics and the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It now provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to be improved. Some governors are fully involved in checking the school's performance, including data, that shows pupils' attainment and progress. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of staff including how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised; for example, governors scrutinise the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. They are actively involved in the life of the school and effectively hold leaders to account.

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	104569
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	411766

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Smith
Headteacher	Margaret Cunningham
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2010
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