

Lonesome Primary School

Grove Road, Mitcham, CR4 1SD

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- In recent years, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have varied from average to well below average.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is well below average whereas in reading and mathematics it is average.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not consistently good enough throughout the school to secure good achievement for pupils over time.
- Checks on pupils' progress are not always effective enough to promote faster progress, particularly in writing.
- The headteacher's leadership is having a positive impact on teaching and progress but the leadership of other staff and governors is not consistently good.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked but some teachers are not as good as others in making sure that pupils take enough notice of the guidance.

The school has the following strengths:

- The school is a lively, welcoming place which encourages pupils to want to learn.
- Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and behave well, both in lessons and around the school.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to improve the school and the improvement in results seen in this year's provisional results for Year 2 and Year 6 shows that their actions are starting to have a positive impact.
- Attendance has improved because the school has worked successfully to make sure that parents and pupils understand why regular attendance is so important.
- Good partnerships with local schools help to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or part lessons, including two joint observations with the deputy headteacher and made a series of short visits to classrooms with the headteacher. They listened to pupils reading and attended assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, the Chair and one other member of the governing body, and a range of staff including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s records of pupils’ attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety, attendance, and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as safeguarding documents and other school policies.
- Questionnaires returned by twenty three staff were considered.
- Parental views were sought at the start of the school day and from the school’s own records of work with parents. Inspectors had discussions with four parents who specifically asked to meet the inspection team. The views of 15 parents who had completed the on-line survey, Parent View, were also considered.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clementina Aina

Additional Inspector

Sandra Teacher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school with a Nursery.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is broadly in line with the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need. However, there is considerable variation between year groups.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is additional money provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. The school currently has no children from service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school after the previous inspection. She was absent on maternity leave for much of the academic year 2011–2012 and returned at the end of the Spring Term of 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - raising some teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - ensuring teachers make more effective use of assessment information so that work is better matched to pupils' needs and that pupils make faster and more consistently good progress.
- Raise standards in writing to the level of those in reading and mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and for a variety of purposes in different subjects
 - making sure that all pupils are given time to use the information from marking to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors by:
 - ensuring that all leaders and managers, including governors, are rigorously monitoring the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' progress so that achievement is consistently good.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below average for their age. They make good progress in their personal development. They learn to play well together and can talk confidently about what they are doing. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is more variable and most children's attainment is still below expectations when they move into Year 1.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and 6 has been inconsistent. In Year 2, it has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, results have fluctuated. This is because the quality of the teaching has been too variable. In 2012, results dropped to below average. The indications are that the 2013 Year 6 provisional results are better and that standards in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are now broadly in line with expectations. However, standards in writing are still well below average. Year 2 results have also improved, though not quite to the level of 2011.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points is not consistently good. In some classes, progress is good for all groups but in other classes, pupils have not made fast enough progress, particularly in writing. This includes the progress of some groups of pupils, for example disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding make at least similar progress to, and occasionally faster progress than, their peer group. There is, however, still a gap between their attainment and that of other pupils, though the evidence for the current Year 6 suggests that the gap is closing. In 2012, the gap was about a year in mathematics and over a year in English. The difference between the two subjects reflects the weaknesses in writing which affected overall results in English.
- The emphasis on literacy has had a positive effect on reading skills. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) has improved and more pupils reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check this year than did so in 2012. By Year 6, almost all pupils are reading at the expected level for their age and over a third are reading at a higher level.
- Attainment in writing is improving in some classes because teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and are giving them more opportunities to write at length and in depth across different subjects. This is, however, not yet consistent enough in all classes to ensure rapid enough progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but is still too variable. There is not yet enough good and outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils to make at least good progress across the school. This is partly because expectations are not high enough in some classes.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and mostly gives them sensible guidance on what to do to improve. In some classes, pupils are given time to respond to marking but this is also not consistent and so does not always lead to improving progress.
- In the Reception and Nursery classes, a good range of activities help to develop children's personal and social skills. Adults also plan interesting activities to develop reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills but sometimes miss opportunities to extend learning and progress through their questioning. They do not always record progress in enough detail to ensure that the next activities build on what children already know and can do.
- An increasing amount of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Visits to a number of mathematics lessons showed that most teachers had matched their teaching well to the needs of their pupils and as a result they were making rapid progress. Similarly, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils were making good progress when writing a leaflet because they were writing for

a real purpose. In some lessons, though, pupils did not make rapid enough progress because the introduction to the activities took too long and did not leave enough time for pupils to complete enough work to a high standard.

- Pupils are being encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning. They usually know what their next target is in reading, writing and mathematics, and refer to the cards when working, but they are not always clear enough about exactly what they need to do to reach the next level.
- Some teachers are making better use of information about pupils' progress and, when used well, in planning, the work challenges pupils more and they start to make faster progress. However, this is still not a consistent picture across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school, work well together in lessons and are positive about learning.
- Pupils enjoy the variety of activities available at break and lunchtime and make full use of the spacious playground and field. They generally play well together but very occasionally play can become a little too boisterous and some pupils need reminders about what is expected. Pupils themselves said that behaviour in lessons and around school has 'got better'.
- Pupils also enjoy the visits which support their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils were keen to talk about their recent residential visit and other pupils talked about visits to museums and other places of interest.
- Anti-bullying events, discussions during assemblies and guidance about the use of the internet help make pupils aware of how to stay safe. Pupils in one class had made some interesting posters to advise other pupils about e-safety. Pupils know what to do about bullying and say that should it occur, staff deal with it effectively.
- The school celebrates the range of cultures found in the school and successfully encourages pupils from different backgrounds to respect each other's culture and beliefs. Relationships at all levels are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful to adults and get on well with one another.
- Attendance is improving as a result of thorough checking and successful efforts by the school to work with families. Attendance rates have gone from below average to just above average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher has a very clear view of what the school needs to do to improve and the action she has taken since returning from maternity leave has resulted in improvement, for example in the results in the current Year 6. Staff are supportive of her ambition for the school.
- Leaders and managers generally have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and main priorities for development, though some have found it harder to adopt a really rigorous approach. They know that even though achievement has improved this year in reading and mathematics and started to improve in writing, more work needs to be done to make sure that all aspects of learning and progress are consistently good.
- The closer checking of pupils' progress is helping to raise standards. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and some other leaders have a good grasp of the information gained from this and are able to use it to target support to better effect, but this is not consistent at all levels of management.
- The focus on monitoring the quality of teaching has increased the amount of good or better teaching and eliminated inadequate teaching. The headteacher has been prepared to take tough action to improve teaching and staff are now very aware that they are accountable for pupils' progress. They also know that they will be given help and support to improve their teaching.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and covers all the requirements of the national curriculum. It

is extended by a range of visits and visitors which pupils appreciate. They are also enthusiastic participants in a good range of sporting activities, often in partnership with other local schools. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. Opportunities for social and cultural development are more limited overall because of more limited opportunities for art, music and drama. The promotion of social development is good in the Nursery and Reception classes.

- The school works well with most parents and they are happy with the progress their children are making. The parents of the Nursery and Reception classes like the opportunity to help their children settle at the start of the day. A minority, however, do not feel that they know enough about what their children are doing and some are reluctant to raise concerns. The leadership team know that they need to continue to work hard to ensure that parents have good information.
- The local authority is providing effective support for the school and is working with staff to ensure that improvements are secure and sustained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive and know the main areas of strengths and weaknesses in the school. They know that there are still weaknesses in teaching and these are being tackled but are not fully involved in planning for school improvement. This limits their ability to ask the challenging questions needed to make sure that the school is doing as well as it could be. Governors understand how the pupil premium funding is used and are starting to monitor the impact of this on these pupils' progress. They are less knowledgeable about how performance management is used to ensure that pupils make good progress or how effective teaching is rewarded by salary progression. The governing body ensures safeguarding requirements are met and properly implemented.

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	102636
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	412019

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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Smith
Headteacher	Vanessa Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 June 2009
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