

Lark Hill Community Primary School

Liverpool Street, Salford, Greater Manchester, M5 4BJ

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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.

- The headteacher, supported by very able senior leaders, has accelerated the progress of pupils and their achievement.
- A good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children well for school life. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. Given the low starting points to school, this equates to good achievement for pupils.
- Teaching is good. It promotes good academic progress particularly in English and prepares pupils well to make the most of their future education.
- At the heart of the school is the high quality care it gives each pupil and the efforts it makes to work with their families and embrace the community.
- The school works effectively to promote equality of opportunity. This is shown in the way the school very successfully supports disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Excellent investments into sport are a major factor in promoting pupils' confidence and enjoyment in being active.
- The school's engagement with parents is encouraged. Those parents who gave an opinion are unanimous that they recommend the school to others.
- The staff team is managed very well and its professional skills are constantly developed and improved to benefit pupils. The school has the capacity to improve in future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. The more able are not always challenged enough, pupils have limited scope to work independently and computer technology is not used well enough.
- Pupils are not always aware of their achievement in lessons and the longer-term targets required to reach higher standards.
- Progress in mathematics is slower than in English. Pupils' ability to apply their basic mathematical skills to solve real-life practical investigations is limited which reduces the proportion exceeding the standards expected for their age.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons and parts of lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were conducted with governors, the staff team, a representative from the local authority and three groups of pupils.
- Evaluations of a range of school documentation contributed to the inspection judgements. These included the details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The views of parents were secured by analysing 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. In the last two years, the school's admissions policy has changed and numbers have almost doubled.
- The majority of pupils is of White British background with an increasing proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a breakfast club. There is also an after-school club which is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted. The inspection reports for this provision can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the school. Nearly all teaching staff have changed and a new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post just over two years ago. Many improvements have been made to the accommodation to create larger classrooms.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - deepening the use of diagnostic assessment to refine planning so that the needs of the more able are better met
 - encouraging pupils in lessons to have the confidence to use their initiative and make decisions about what, and how, they learn by, for example, making better use of computer technology
 - making sure all pupils understand their own achievement and what they need to do to reach higher standards.
- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics by:
 - widening the opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills to solve practical, real-life investigations
 - making sure marking in mathematics is rigorous and consistently applied across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Progress is accelerating quickly and standards are rising. Given pupils' starting points, achievement is good. This positive picture is testament to the decisions taken by the headteacher and senior leaders that have raised expectations for pupils, improved teaching and adapted the curriculum.
- From low levels of development when children start the Early Years Foundation Stage, good progress across the school results in average standards by the end of Year 6.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good gains in all aspects of their development. Despite this, the proportion achieving good levels of development by the time they start Year 1 is below average.
- In Key Stage 1, good progress continues. Expectations have been raised and where improvement is needed, action is taken. This is evident in the response to the below-average results for 2012 of the national screening tests for the sounds that letters make (phonics). Swift action has led to results in 2013 rising to above average.
- At Year 2, standards have been steadily improving and, in 2012, were average in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional data for 2013 indicate that results dipped but, given the pupils' starting points, represent good rates of progress.
- At Key Stage 2, standards at Year 6 are typically average. Progress exceeds national expectations in English. In mathematics, progress is closer to the average nationally. This is because the proportion of pupils exceeding the national expectations for eleven-year-old pupils is below average.
- As pupils move through school, they develop confidence in reading, become capable writers and acquire the essential knowledge underpinning mathematics. Pupils' ability to apply mathematical skills independently to a wide range of contexts, however, is not fully developed and reduces the attainment of the most-able pupils in particular.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good, and in some cases, outstanding progress. Their standards match those of similar pupils nationally. This is due to the impact of excellent management for such pupils which ensures that they are identified at a young age and that effective actions are taken to support them.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is good. They reach standards in English and mathematics that are better than those of similar pupils nationally and close to those of others in the school. Their good achievement is because the funding has been spent on extra time for adults to work with such pupils and the purchase of resources to supplement teaching.
- The new school sport fund is leading to good participation by all pupils in physical education and sport. The employment of two sports coaches within the teaching team, and initiatives to widen the range of sports on offer to pupils, has a positive effect on promoting healthy lifestyles, good physical well-being and their enjoyment of school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good with some outstanding elements. Reading and writing are both taught well. Good opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to develop their spoken language and extend their vocabulary, through, for example, paired and group discussion. This develops their ability to express their ideas clearly and imaginatively when speaking and writing.
- There are some inconsistencies between classes, which prevent standards from being even higher. Often pupils listen and respond to directions but are not confident to take some responsibility for what and how they learn.
- While assessment is generally used well and its value in diagnosing pupils' needs has improved

enormously over the last two years, there are times when a lack of precision in the use of assessment information limits the challenge for the more-able pupils. In addition, the opportunities are limited for pupils to use their initiative and apply their basic skills to practical, investigative situations. This is most notable in mathematics and hinders the pupils' powers of reasoning and ability to explain the strategies used to solve problems. Consequently, progress in mathematics is slower than in reading and writing.

- Resources are generally used well to support learning in lessons. Pupils use practical equipment to, for example, make sense of mathematical ideas. The use of computer technology is limited by current gaps in infrastructure in the school.
- Teaching assistants have a wealth of expertise. They work closely with teachers to support pupils individually and in groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are sensitively helped so that they access all aspects of school life and overcome what are for some, significant barriers to learning.
- Marking is particularly good in writing because it gives clear guidance to pupils about how to improve, but is not as effective in mathematics. There are inconsistencies in the way teachers give pupils guidance about how they can raise their achievement over time in order to reach higher levels. As a result, pupils' skills in assessing for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve are underdeveloped.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides an exceptionally nurturing and caring environment where pupils feel safe. All pupils, including those who are vulnerable due to their circumstances, are supported very well. Parents are very positive about the care that staff provide for their children.
- The strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage leads to a rapid improvement in the children's personal and social development. This gives older pupils the skills required to form good relationships with others and the confidence to access the curriculum.
- Across the school, pupils' behaviour is good and at times exemplary in lessons. Excellent initiatives to support learning outdoors during play and lunch times mean that pupils are never at a loose end. They develop good social skills by participating in an array of highly organised games and activities led by willing staff.
- Bullying of any type is rare. A small minority of parents who offered an opinion expressed concerns about this aspect of school life. Inspection findings show that the senior leaders and staff approach any incidents with firmness and sensitivity. Records held by the school support the pupils' view that behaviour has improved greatly over the last two years.
- Pupils are aware of how to behave safely and talk about the steps they take to protect themselves when using computer technology including using the Internet.
- Improving attendance is a focus for the school. It has risen rapidly over the last two years and is now at the national average. Good attention is paid to ensuring that those who have a planned absence do not fall behind and a skilled team of staff works closely with families to promote good punctuality and discourage absence.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher inspires staff, pupils and parents alike. His ambition for the school and crystal-clear plan for improving the life chances of pupils is shared by all involved with the school. Staff morale is high and all are committed to securing and extending the improvements currently under way.
- The new staff team has gelled quickly and has a clear understanding of its roles. The senior leaders and leaders of subjects and different phases keep check on the quality of teaching in their classes and subjects. Outstanding leadership for pastoral care, and also for disabled pupils and those who have special education needs, underlines the school's commitment to equal

opportunities and tackling discrimination.

- Staff are carefully selected and skilfully deployed to benefit the pupils. Very effective systems are in place to keep an eye on the quality of teaching, the outcomes of which are used to identify where learning can improve. Targets are set for all staff for the performance of their pupils. Financial incentives are increasingly used to attract and retain staff and to reward success.
- Everyone is constantly improving their professional skills. Very good systems exist for enabling the sharing of skills between staff. Teaching assistants access a range of courses to improve their already good talents.
- The curriculum has been restructured to have a stronger focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Subjects are adapted very well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Sport has a high profile. Nonetheless, there is not enough scope for pupils to become independent learners by, for example, using computer technology and the needs of the most able are not always planned well.
- The school is working hard to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education. Information about events is frequent, often using texting and social media. Parents are informed about their children's academic progress and are welcome to talk with staff if concerns exist.
- Good support and advice are offered by the local authority representative. An objective view of the school is provided and pointers for improvement offered.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has a good understanding of the data linked to pupils' achievement. Governors have developed good skills of interrogating the information and raising questions relating to the progress of groups of pupils and the leadership of teaching. Some make regular visits to the school to check on the progress of aspects of the school's development plan. This strengthens the governors' ability to challenge and support the school. Governors have a good understanding of the way pupil premium funding is improving the attainment and achievement of the pupils known to be eligible for this support. The governing body ensures that systems to check on the performance of staff, including the headteacher, are in place and effective. Good procedures are in place to implement a new pay policy for staff that meets the new national requirements. Governors ensure that all safeguarding systems are in place and keep pupils and adults safe and secure.

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	132147
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	426265

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	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Almond
Headteacher	James Blackwell
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
Telephone number	0161 9211390
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	larkhill.primaryschool@salford.gov.uk

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