

# Larkfield Primary School

Preston New Road, Churchtown, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 8PA

**Inspection dates** 10–11 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not progress at an even rate through the school.
- Not enough teaching is good or better because work is not always well matched to pupils' needs.
- Those pupils who do not make enough progress in reading do not always get the support that they need to improve.
- In some lessons, pupils' interest is not fully engaged and they do not have enough time to practise their skills or discuss their own ideas and learning.
- Attendance is below average.
- Leaders do not make full use of the school's assessment system to check the progress of different groups of pupils across the school.
- Feedback to teachers does not always identify the ways in which teaching can be improved.
- Targets in the school planning documents are not consistently clear, precise and measurable to give a clear picture of how well the school is doing, and this prevents the school from improving quickly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- In the best lessons, teachers provide stimulating activities that fire pupils' imaginations.
- Children make good and sometimes excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. They like each other and value their teachers. They behave well and feel safe in school.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and there is a good range of additional activities for pupils to take part in outside of lessons.
- Parents are supportive of the school and would recommend it to other parents.
- Leaders, including governors, have accurately identified what needs to be done to move the school forward. The staff are a committed team, determined to bring about the improvements that will secure at least good achievement for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 parts of lessons as well as sessions taken by teaching assistants. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents, members of the governing body, school staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 46 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered 39 staff questionnaires, a telephone call and a letter from parents.
- A range of documents were considered, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. The inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.

## Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Docking

Additional Inspector

Eric Craven

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Larkfield Primary is larger than most primary schools and increasing in numbers of pupils.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Recently a higher than average proportion of pupils started or left the school at times other than expected.
- The school hosts a resourced provision for pupils with physical needs, though there are currently no pupils in school who require these facilities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is all good or better in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment between Year 1 and Year 6, by making sure that:
  - in all lessons pupils are inspired to learn and have enough time to practise their skills and get on with their independent work.
  - assessment information is used to tailor activities carefully so that they are always well matched to the needs of all pupils
  - the teaching of letters and sounds is better matched to pupils' needs
  - all pupils, especially older pupils in Key Stage 2, get the support that they need to develop their reading skills
  - staff seek out and implement outstanding practice.
- Develop further the current procedures aimed at improving pupils' attendance so that pupils' attendance is at least similar to the national average.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by making sure that:
  - targets set out in the school planning documents are sufficiently ambitious, clear and measurable to give the school an accurate view of how well it is doing and support rapid school improvement
  - teachers are always given suggestions on how to improve teaching and learning following checks on the quality of teaching
  - school assessment information is examined more carefully to check that actions intended to improve the achievement and attainment of specific groups of pupils are effective.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Nationally published data, unverified results of the 2013 national tests for Year 6 pupils and the school's own pupil assessment information show inconsistencies in the rates of progress from year to year and also across the school. Although there are pockets of good progress, overall achievement requires improvement.
- Test results across the last three years have varied at the end of both key stages. Most recent test results show that standards at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although achievement fluctuates, in 2012 the proportion of pupils in Y6 making expected and more than expected progress in reading and writing compared well with national figures. However, while most pupils made the progress expected of them in mathematics too few pupils made more than this.
- The school rightly identified the need to improve the teaching of mathematics and have put in place strategies such as teaching pupils in smaller groups in Key Stage 2. As a result pupils are given regular practice of basic skills and have more confidence in applying their skills to solve problems. However, these systems have not been in place long enough to impact fully on standards.
- School leaders have also recognised that the teaching of reading needs to improve. And additional lessons in phonics (matching letters and sounds) have been introduced. As a result a higher proportion of pupils were working at expected levels in the Year 1 phonics check this year. However, groups are large and do not always provide teaching and learning that are well matched to pupils' individual needs.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has dipped this year, when compared to last year. Those pupils who have not reached expected reading levels towards the end of Key Stage 2, do not always have the support they need to help them catch up.
- The school provides focussed support for the more-able pupils and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The progress that these pupils make is similar to the progress of other pupils in the school.
- The school is successfully closing the gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not. There is no difference in attainment in reading and mathematics for pupils eligible for free school meals, but they are one term behind others in writing. This confirms the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Most children start the Reception Year with the skills and knowledge typically expected for their age except in reading, writing and mathematics, which are below that expected. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress particularly with their reading, writing and mathematical skills and are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Though the numbers of pupils entering and leaving school at times other than expected has increased, school data indicates that this movement does not negatively impact on Year 6 results. However, a higher proportion of pupils who have benefitted from the excellent start that Reception class provides were able to attain the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1, than those pupils who started the school after the Reception Year.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is some good teaching across the school. However, the quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is uneven between Year 1 and Year 6 and requires improvements because it has not resulted in continued good progress for pupils.
- Where teaching requires improvement, assessment is not used effectively enough to plan work that is at the right level for pupils and as a result work is too easy for some pupils. On occasions, lessons do not provide pupils with the stimulation they need to learn enthusiastically and often

too much time is wasted before pupils can get on with their work.

- In the best lessons, teaching inspires pupils to want to learn. For example, in a good lower Key Stage 2 English lesson, the teacher used a simple but effective resource to build excitement and stimulate pupils' imagination. Pupils had to assign characteristics to the owner of a set of items. The pupils worked very well together to come up with some excellent ideas. However, pupils do not always have the opportunity to work together or use resources which inspire them so successfully in other lessons.
- Teachers have too few opportunities to benefit from the outstanding practice of other teachers.
- Teachers' marking has recently improved. Some staff celebrate what pupils have done well and give advice on how to improve work, especially in English. Pupils are given time to correct and edit their work during 'fix it time'. This helps them to learn from their mistakes.
- Teaching is consistently good in Reception classes. Staff skilfully question children to find out about their interests. They then make sure that all activities provided appeal to the children and encourage them to want to have a go. Adults promote independence rather than doing things for the children. For example, because books are colour coded children know where to get a particular type of book from their class library and where to return it. They are taking responsibility for their own learning at this early age.
- Teaching assistants are well trained; they question pupils effectively and provide a good level of support to the pupils that they work with.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are very positive about their school and value their teachers. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe in school and the overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children are well looked after.
- During the inspection pupils behaved well and school records confirm that this is typical. Occasionally, when activities are not accurately matched to pupils' abilities their attention diminishes and they do not learn quickly enough.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between bullying and falling out. They are adamant that there is no bullying and should it occur it would be rapidly and effectively sorted. One pupil commented that, 'There is no bullying because it is like we are all family here.'
- Older pupils readily accept roles of responsibility. Year 6 enjoy acting as buddies to help settle Reception children into school. School councillors help to organise a range of fundraising activities so that pupils can contribute to buying school equipment. For example, they recently held a 'bring and buy' sale and used the proceeds to buy goal posts and balls for the playground.
- The pupils at Larkfield have an incredible sense of fairness; they want to help children less fortunate than themselves. Every class spends one month raising money to sponsor an African child called Ndeye. This is an activity that pupils are very proud of.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in sports to help them stay healthy and promote well-being. The school council have identified ways in which they would like the primary school sport funding to be allocated. Though there are plans in place for this grant there is little impact as yet on the health and well-being of pupils.
- Staff work closely with parents to make sure that good attendance is always on the agenda. However, attendance remains below average and parents do not always respond to the school's requests.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because school leaders have not been robust enough in checking the quality of teaching and learning through the school in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress. In the past the school's view of its own performance has been over-generous but appropriate priorities have now been identified to further raise achievement, which

indicates that leaders are in a position to make improvements.

- The school has developed a good system to track the progress of individuals and groups. It has been used effectively in some instances. For example, the measures put in place to support pupils eligible for pupil premium funding have been successful. However, it is not yet used well enough to establish the progress of other identified groups of pupils across the school. Consequently, it is difficult for leaders to assess how effective their actions are in improving standards.
- The school's planning documents are focused on improving the progress and attainment of pupils. However, the targets set are not always clear or ambitious enough to steer rapid school improvement or provide an accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- Feedback to staff, following the regular checks on teaching, sometimes focuses too heavily on what they have done well and does not always provide suggestions on how the quality of teaching can be improved.
- Leaders and governors have realised that the school needs to sharpen its approach to ensuring that pupils' progress is rapid and sustained. They have a committed staff team who are now prepared to do all they can to move the school forward.
- The curriculum is planned well and provides pupils with interesting experiences, enhanced by a good range of after-school activities and exciting trips linked to class topics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given good attention.
- Parents and staff are highly supportive of the school leadership and relationships with parents are usually positive. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) would recommend the school to other parents.
- The local authority checks on the school's effectiveness and provides a moderate level of support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are keen to preserve the character of Larkfield Primary, a school to which they are highly committed. They are kept informed of strengths and priorities through a range of reports and their visits to school. Governors regularly engage in training to develop their skills. They understand school performance data and this helps them to challenge and support the school appropriately. Governors are kept informed regarding the quality of teaching and understand that progression through teachers' pay scales must be linked to pupils' progress. The governing body know how pupil premium funding is spent but are less well informed of the impact of this spending. They have not yet discussed the plans for the primary physical education funding. However, they are now aware that the impact of these additional monies must be checked and they have the skills and determination to address this. Statutory duties, including financial and safeguarding requirements, are fulfilled.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104887
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	426302

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	303
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Clarke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julian Ward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 224720
<b>Fax number</b>	01704 214786
<b>Email address</b>	admin.larkfield@schools.sefton.gov.uk



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