

# Mab Lane Primary School

Mab Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 6QL

**Inspection dates** 30–31 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupil rates of progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics are not consistently good across school.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good or better.
- Teachers do not always plan activities to challenge the most-able pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently set targets for pupils which tell them what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Some pupils become unsettled and lose concentration when lessons do not maintain their full attention. Some behaviour outside of classrooms is not always good.
- Middle leaders, many of whom are new to the role, are not fully involved in checking on the quality of teaching and pupil progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors have not always challenged the school's leaders strongly enough about the quality of teaching and why some pupils do not make better progress.
- Disruption due to staffing issues is preventing the school achieving consistency in the quality of teaching and pupil achievement so that it is at least good.

### The school has the following strengths

- Standards have improved over the last year, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Most pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and are clear about what each individual teacher needs to do to improve their practice.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who work as a strong team, are taking the right steps to improve the school.
- Partnerships, including with parents and the local authority, are supporting improvements in pupil achievement, well-being and extra-curricular opportunities.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from three different year groups read, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- The inspectors spoke to a group of parents and took account of the school's consultations with parents and school questionnaires completed by staff. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View.

## Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Mab Lane Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well 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 by the local authority.)
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils which was visited as part of the inspection.
- There is a local authority pupil referral unit and a local authority Early Years speech and language on the school site which are subject to a separate inspection.
- Since September 2013 the school has opened, in conjunction with a local special school, a nurture base for its pupils. It provides support for eight Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in addressing their personal, social and emotional needs in the mornings. It is not a designated specially resourced provision. This was visited as part of the inspection.
- Pupils are taught in single age classes apart from one class where some pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 pupils are taught together.
- The school is being supported by a National Leader of Education (NLE) from Kingsley Community Primary School.
- Since the last inspection there have been changes to senior leadership with a new headteacher appointed in September 2011 and new deputy headteacher appointed in September 2012. There has also been significant and ongoing staff change and turbulence.

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better so as to raise pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan activities that challenge all pupils, particularly the most able, so that all pupils remain engaged and on task and so behave consistently well
  - providing opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills, including spelling, grammar and punctuation, in subjects other than English
  - ensuring that pupils are consistently given opportunities to respond to the guidance and feedback they are given in teachers' marking
  - consistently setting targets for pupils' individual needs in English and mathematics that help them to know how to improve their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing the role of middle leaders in checking on the quality of teaching and pupil progress in their areas of responsibility
  - developing further strategies to minimise disruption from staffing issues to ensure greater

consistency in teaching

- developing the role of the governing body in rigorously checking on school performance and in challenging the school where its performance is not good enough.

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

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although achievement is starting to improve, overall it requires improvement because since the last inspection pupils' achievement has been variable. This is due to the considerable disruption to staffing, particularly in 2012 at both Year 2 and Year 6 where standards declined significantly. Standards improved, however, over the last academic year. This is due to some improvements in the quality of teaching and more effectively targeted pupil support.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 in English and in mathematics improved in 2013 but are still lower than those expected nationally and not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels, particularly the most-able pupils. The proportion of pupils reaching the national average in mathematics is average but the proportions reaching national expectations in both reading and in writing is below average.
- More pupils are now starting to make better progress from their individual starting points throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The majority of pupils made expected progress, particularly in mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is below national, particularly in writing.
- When children join the Nursery class most children's skills, particularly in communication and language and personal and social development, are well below those typically expected for their age. Children usually leave Reception Year with skills that have improved but are still below the national average. However, more recent improvements in teaching and the curriculum are helping to ensure that children are beginning to make better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The focus on teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) has been improved and this is enabling pupils to now make better progress in reading. School data shows there have been significant improvements in the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the required standard in the national reading check on phonic skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do at least as well as other pupils in the school given their different abilities and starting points. Because of the increasingly good and targeted support they receive, many of these pupils do well and make the progress expected of them.
- The personal, social and emotional needs of pupils who attend the nurture class in the mornings are met well and activities meet their needs. They are making similar progress to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The large proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 which is at least in line with other pupils in the school and the gaps are narrower for these pupils than those seen nationally. The rate of progress made by these groups of pupils has increased this year.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who have English as an additional language do as well as their peers. This shows the school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching has improved over the last academic year and the majority of teaching seen was good, overall, teaching requires improvement. Significant staff changes since the last inspection have hampered leaders' efforts to bring about consistency in teachers' practice.
- Where teaching requires improvement teachers do not always set work at the right level and there is not always a high-enough level of challenge, particularly for the most able. When this happens, some pupils lose interest and concentration and sometimes behave less well which slows their progress down.

- Teachers' marking is regular and there are good examples of marking which gives pupils information on how to improve their work or on the next steps in their learning, particularly in mathematics. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils have time in lessons to respond and act on the guidance given. This slows the rate of progress pupils make.
- Teachers do not always give pupils specific individual targets for improvement in writing and mathematics, so not all pupils are aware of the next steps in learning and of how to reach them.
- In a good Year 2 lesson pupils were building their story writing skills using *Room on the Broom* as a stimulus and checking their own and each other's work to improve their writing.
- The school has recently introduced additional lessons for pupils to practise their skills in writing, including spelling and grammar, but opportunities for them to practise these skills in subjects other than English are limited.
- Most teachers plan lessons which engage and motivate pupils. Pupils say they particularly enjoy mathematics because it is more challenging and the 'daily write' sessions because they can practise their writing skills.
- In a Year 4/5 class pupils showed a good understanding of how to multiply and divide by 10, 100 and 1000 explaining the relationship between the numbers and decimal point. The teacher carefully questioned pupils to establish their understanding and challenged the most able pupils to solve different problems.
- The school has benefited from working with the local authority in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics). This is helping pupils to use their phonic knowledge to read with increased confidence and accuracy and improve progress in reading.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although pupils' behaviour around the school is usually good, behaviour overall requires improvement. When activities in lessons do not engage pupils well enough or tasks are too easy for some or too difficult for others, some lose interest and concentration.
- Pupils say that most pupils behave well but occasionally, mostly outside the classroom and at lunchtimes, behaviour is not as good as it could be. Inspection evidence supports this view. However, behaviour records show that any incidents of poor behaviour are appropriately followed up. Although exclusions had increased in the previous academic year inspection evidence shows that the school managed these incidents thoroughly.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved and they are very clear about the behaviour rewards and sanctions system, which is consistently applied across school. On inspection pupils were polite, well-mannered and respectful and keen to receive the 'catch me being good' awards.
- Attendance is improving and most pupils now attend regularly. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has declined significantly. A number of initiatives which are beginning to improve attendance, such as celebrating attendance during assemblies. Some pupils attend the school's breakfast club, and this is beginning to improve overall punctuality and attendance.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and say that there are a few instances of bullying. They are confident that any instances will be dealt with swiftly.
- The school has used some school sports funding to employ two coaches who support pupils in sports activities throughout the day, including in the breakfast club, at playtimes and in after-school clubs. The pupils spoke very positively about how this has helped improve behaviour but also taught them new sports skills such as basketball.
- Pupils feel safe in school and can talk about different ways to keep themselves safe, for example with strangers, including not giving out information on the internet.
- The school's own survey and discussion with parents' shows that parents say that their children are safe at school and that overall school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils take on different responsibilities with pride, such as school councillors, buddies and waste-management monitors. Pupils talked with pride about how they raise money and attend events in the local community, including meeting other school council representatives at the town hall

to share ideas.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement overall because the pace of improvement is steady rather than good and governors have not checked rigorously enough on the school's performance in the past. The work of middle leaders is undeveloped. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who work as a strong team have an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve and are resolute and determined in their vision to achieve their aims.
- The headteacher has been diligent in tackling areas of improvement and is managing the current disruption to staffing, including some long-term absence. However, the strategies employed have not yet been sufficient in enabling the school to achieve consistent improvements in the quality of teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress to a consistently good rate.
- Senior leaders check regularly on the quality of teaching and school's performance and have improved the quality of teaching through appropriate training and support for teachers.
- The headteacher has actively sought support from, and worked closely with, the local authority and other schools. She has also worked effectively with a National Leader in Education. This work has brought about improvements to the teaching of phonics, the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attendance. These improvements, along with the improvements in standards and progress over the last academic year shows the school's capability to improve.
- There is a rigorous system for tracking the progress of individuals and groups of pupils as they move through the school. The information gained is used with increasing effectiveness to identify pupils who might be in danger of falling behind in their learning. The regular meetings held with staff are being used well to hold individual teachers to account for pupils' progress.
- The arrangements in place for the performance management of teachers are increasingly robust. Performance objectives are focused on specific and measurable outcomes in terms of pupils' progress. Additionally, teachers' movement up the pay scales is more closely linked to improvements in the quality of their teaching and improved pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders, many of whom are new to the role, do not yet check enough on the quality of teaching and pupil progress to help secure consistent improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- The school has a strong ethos of care, inclusion and equality. It carefully identifies pupils' needs and offers support for pupils needing additional help so they can learn both alongside their peers and in other small groups.
- One example of this provision is the recent introduction of a nurture base for some pupils in Years 1 and 2 which provides good support to meet their social and emotional needs. The school checks on the progress of these pupils as part of their ongoing procedures.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of visits and visitors, as well as opportunities to engage in different activities such as drumming and a residential visit which supports the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body recognises that the school requires rapid and sustained improvement. It has recently reviewed its structure and governors now have an increasingly accurate view of what the school needs to improve. The governing body has begun to work more closely with the senior leadership team and governors are now more familiar with performance data. However, it has not been rigorous enough in checking on school performance and has not always challenged the school sufficiently well over time about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors have a better awareness of the quality of teaching and the links to teachers' performance and salary progression which is based on meeting targets. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities and safeguarding requirements are met. They manage finances well and are aware of how the pupil premium funding has been used.

## 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>	131480
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	426309

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Glyn Thomson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lorraine Walwyn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2594282
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