

# Mossgate Primary School

Kingsway, Heysham, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA3 2EE

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Teaching is not always as effective as it should be. Sometimes, pupils are not challenged enough, especially the more-able. On occasion, teachers do not pick up soon enough on pupils who are slow to get started on work or who are losing interest.
- There was a significant dip in the progress to Year 6 with mathematics in 2012 and a greater dip with writing in 2013. In 2012 and 2013, when all pupils and all subjects are considered, overall progress to Year 6 was less than that found nationally.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average this year. At present, pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is variable. Some pupils are doing better than others.
- The current Year 6 pupils' writing is weaker than is usual for a Year 6 class in the autumn term. It is much weaker than their reading and mathematics. Although their year-on-year progress with writing has been reasonable, and good for some individuals, weaknesses evident as the year-group left Key Stage 1 have not been overcome fully. To some extent, writing is weak in other Key Stage 2 classes, and generally weaker than reading and mathematics.
- While there have been improvements since the previous inspection, in some respects the extent of improvement is not sufficient to alleviate concerns about achievement in the recent past. There is a need for even more determined leadership and management.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make very good headway in the Reception class.
- There has been strong improvement in mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection.
- Pupils who may find it hard to learn are provided for well and thrive.
- Teachers' marking, including with pupils' writing, is painstaking and helpful.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. Their positive attitudes and the good ethos are strengths of the school.
- The assessment of pupils' standards is accurate. The quality assurance of teaching is carried out to a high professional standard. There are now strong links with parents and they are kept well informed about their children's progress. There have been significant and well led, recent improvements.
- Recent appointments have increased management capacity considerably. Governance of the school is strong and well informed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, and all teachers were seen. Two lessons had observations shared with the headteacher. In addition, a few short sessions were observed.
- Meetings were held with four members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils' work in the current year and previous years, the school's recent and previous national assessment results, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and improvement plans. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent, and the views of several parents as they brought children to school. There were 16 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. None are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in the armed services) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been two recent staff appointments, which have increased the senior leadership team from two to four. Middle managers for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were appointed with effect from the present term.

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

- Improve teaching in order to raise achievement across the school by:
  - ensuring that lessons are planned with enough challenge for all pupils, especially the more able
  - monitoring progress during lessons and adapting when necessary in order to ensure that all pupils make good headway
  - taking yet more action to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and phrasing by interaction with individual pupils to improve work.
- Improve progress and achievement in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that lessons are always planned and delivered with maximum effectiveness.
- Improve attention to any indications of underachievement by leaders identifying trends in individual pupils' progress in every aspect of learning, and taking action to remedy weak progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children starting in the Reception class tend to have skills with speaking and counting that are below, and sometimes well below what is usual for their age. They settle quickly and make good headway. In some years they have reached standards that are typical for their age as they begin Key Stage 1.
- Over time, the progress made in Key Stage 1 has been variable. Occasionally, standards by age seven have been slightly above average. With those now in Year 6, standards at age 7 were low, especially with writing. In 2013, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average, especially in reading. At present, progress in Key Stage 1 is variable and the school is aware of the nature of this variability.
- In early 2012, the previous inspection noted weakness in mathematics. In 2011 assessments showed standards about a term behind national ones. In 2012, with a slightly more able cohort, standards were a little higher compared with national ones, but the pupils' progress from Key Stage 1 to Year 6 was even weaker than in the previous year: in the bottom 16% nationally. Earnest and successful efforts were made to improve mathematics throughout the school. In 2013, Year 6 results showed as much progress in mathematics as is usually found nationally. However, progress with writing since Key Stage 1 was exceptionally poor: in the bottom 5% nationally. The problem was worse with boys than girls. However, overall progress for these pupils was better than in the weakest quarter of schools.
- At present, standards in reading in Key Stage 2 classes are broadly similar to those found across the country. Work on the matching of sounds and letters is generally successful and pupils are proficient in sounding out words. This enables them to read quite fluently. Teachers work hard to develop understanding of what words mean, for example in Year 5, clarifying that an 'automobile' is not a new kind of telephone. In the present Year 6, pupils have made very reasonable progress over time with reading and mathematics.
- Pupils now in Year 6 were about two terms behind with writing as they started Year 3; they were stronger in reading and mathematics. At present, inspectors consider their writing to be weaker than is usually found in the autumn of Year 6. It is weaker than their reading and mathematics. While such a pattern is found nationally, the difference is more marked here. Boys and girls have made reasonable advances over time and a few have made strong progress. However, something of the legacy of underachievement from age seven remains.
- Generally, pupils who are very able reach high levels of attainment. However, some pupils who are in the top third of the ability range, and have potential for high levels, do not fulfil their potential.
- Pupils enjoy sport and music and they profit from the good opportunities provided. Younger pupils were reflective in the points they made in a personal development session.
- Those entitled to pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, often do at least as well in terms of their attainment and progress as others in their class and generally better than such pupils nationally. Funding for their benefit is spent wisely. Those who are disabled or have special educational needs are looked after well. Records show that they often make good progress and they generally get on effectively in lessons.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Inspectors saw teaching that was occasionally outstanding and never inadequate. The majority of lessons had good teaching. However, some that in the main were good had elements that were less effective. Considering its impact over time, teaching is considered to require improvement.
- Teachers know their pupils well and often provide teaching that meets their needs effectively. So too with teaching assistants, who are very skilled in coaxing and encouraging pupils who have

difficulties with learning. The deployment of in-class support enables those entitled to the pupil premium generally to do as well as others. It is a strength of the school that those who are vulnerable because of their circumstances are cared for and catered for well.

- Teachers generally plan activities which are appropriate for the purpose and that are likely to interest pupils. For the most part, teachers' questioning and the tasks provided are pitched at a suitable level to move pupils on beyond their present capabilities. In the Reception class, the teacher commanded very good attention even at the end of young children's tiring day and was persistent in questioning, pushing for sharper use of language with answers.
- However, on occasion, pupils are not challenged enough. An energetic teacher does all the work, not probing enough for pupils' responses. Another leaves pupils to decide for themselves what facts to write about, for instance the number 27, thus letting them work within the limits of what they already know. On several occasions, the more-able pupils in a class (the top third) could have moved faster.
- Sometimes, teachers did not notice soon enough that pupils were struggling to get under way with writing or sums, or that they were becoming bored with a task that had continued for too long. However, occasionally, a teacher wisely weighed up a situation and made an unplanned change in a lesson rather than carrying on with something that was becoming unproductive.
- Marking is conscientious, especially with writing. Teachers underline punctuation omissions, but a few pages later there can be the same type of comma omission. That is because generic rules about uses of commas have not been established with the pupil. Teachers hesitate to make too much of spelling errors, for fear of putting pupils off writing. Thus, a pupil continued with 'wich' rather than 'which' through a dozen pages. Typically in middle Key Stage 2, pupils write two or three lines that are not resolved into sentences and the problem is not easily unscrambled by marking. Pupils write some spelling corrections. However, there is little redrafting of whole pieces of writing. Some teachers are enabling pupils to draft writing on a computer, and this was found to motivate boys in particular. There is scope for more interaction between pupils and staff in refining pieces of writing.

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

- Pupils enjoy school. They like the school and their teachers; and they know their teachers like them. They attend well. They are unfailingly courteous to adults and one another throughout the school. Pupils' positive attitudes make a strong contribution to the school's calm and considerate atmosphere.
- In lessons, pupils are co-operative and generally keen to please their teachers, although a few can be slow to get started on tasks. Most take a pride in their written work, although the handwriting of a few could be neater. Very occasionally, enthusiasm and productivity wane.
- Pupils get on well together, and they feel safe in school. Older pupils have a mature appreciation of how to get on with others, which will stand them in good stead when they move to secondary schools. They know about the forms that bullying can take. Pupils are quite confident that they would have good support if they sought help from an adult. Or, as one pupil said, if another pupil is nasty to you, you might try sorting it out yourself.

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

- It is difficult to establish why achievement has not been better over time, because the headteacher's leadership and dedication are impressive. Many procedures, including those to track pupils' progress and improve teaching seem spot on. It comes down to management capacity, which governors have shrewdly just increased greatly with the appointment of new middle leaders and, at all levels, determination for improvement. With achievement and teaching requiring improvement, this inspection concludes that leadership and management also require improvement, even though many well-judged improvements have been put in hand and senior staff have been unstintingly dedicated in their efforts.

- There has been highly efficient development of teaching and intervention to boost pupils' improvement in mathematics. The headteacher's detailed notes after observing lessons pinpoint astutely areas for improvement. There are convincing accounts of how some teachers have been mentored to better practice. Reports to parents on pupils' progress are now comprehensive and candid. The headteacher and deputy headteacher know every pupil and their current progress. In jointly observed lessons, the judgements of inspectors and the headteacher were in perfect agreement. Assessment records of pupils' standards square perfectly with inspectors' checks on their books. So many good quality procedures and initiatives have been put into place.
- There are many good management strategies, but there have been few staff to take a leadership role. Consequently, with achievement over recent years, one aspect has improved while another has not moved forward sufficiently. This year, turnover of staffing and available funding have enabled governors to increase greatly the management and leadership capacity. So the school is now well placed to do whatever is necessary to make improvement happen, but there will need to be unflinching insistence on getting done what must be done.
- The school is assiduous in doing its best for all pupils, irrespective of ability or background. The curriculum, rightly at the present time, is heavily weighted to literacy and numeracy. Yet there is recognition that there is more to life than the basics skills. By a range of additional opportunities outside school and the greatly enjoyed sports, cookery, technology and other extras, and many subliminal pointers – pupils develop into well-rounded and confident young people. The recent considerable funding for sport development is used wisely, for instance to provide equipment and to cover the cost of facilities outside school.
- The school is supported exceptionally well by the local authority. The school's adviser has detailed and accurate knowledge of how things stand in every classroom. Rightly, the local authority values highly the headteacher's expertise, and uses that with other schools. The school can confidently rely on high quality support from the authority in moving overall effectiveness from the present position to good.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors ensure that safeguarding meets all requirements and that performance management of teachers, and their pay, is as it should be. They have spent pupil premium money wisely and to good effect. They are exceptionally diligent and minutes of governors' and committee meetings attest to determined and well-informed pursuit of issues about standards and action on underachievement. They appreciate the dedication of the headteacher. They have acted decisively on matters within their remit, for instance, increase of management capacity. They know that they must press for improvement. The school is fortunate in having governors so knowledgeable and capable.

## 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>	130262
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426161

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Manley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Christine Lawler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2012
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