

Kensington Primary School

Brae Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L7 2QG

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress from their very different starting points, and have their individual needs well met.
- The school is a vibrant learning environment where all are valued and have the resources and support they need to succeed.
- Teachers create lessons that are interesting, and the school provides a wide range of additional resources, activities and trips, which greatly enrich pupils' experiences.
- Pupils are happy, make friends easily and respect all adults in school. They like school and value learning. Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe in school.
- The school's leaders have successfully secured improvements to teaching and to pupils' progress and attainment, and have maintained these over time.
- The school continues to improve, and for the first time this year standards met the government's current floor standards. This is an impressive feat given that a large proportion of pupils join the school late and many do not speak English as their first language.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school and challenge school leaders to continue to improve every half term, using a comprehensive evaluation of pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of lessons, the most able pupils' progress could accelerate even further, if they knew what to do to reach even higher levels of attainment.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use the skills they learn in mathematics lessons in other subjects, so that they learn how to apply their mathematical knowledge in other contexts.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, some of these jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at pupils' books from all years and in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the governing body, the local authority and with senior and middle leaders. They also met with the teaching assistants, pupils, the school's learning mentor and the pupil and family support officer. Responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and paper questionnaire responses from staff were analysed.
- A wide range of school documents also informed the inspection, including minutes from governing body meetings and meetings with the local authority, reports and lesson observations, and comprehensive details of pupils' progress in all years and subjects.

Inspection team

Rebecca Lawton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hilary Ward	Additional Inspector
Colleen Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kensington is much larger than the average-sized primary school; it has an on-site breakfast club and nursery, both of which were included in the inspection.
- The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a large proportion speaks English as an additional language. There are no major trends in the other languages spoken by pupils.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is more than double the national average. The pupil premium is funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action and school action plus is high, although only a very small number of pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs. The school caters for a wide range of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A large proportion of the pupils in the school arrive in years other than the Nursery or Reception classes, and an equally large number leave partway through school.
- The school receives support from a national leader of education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the level of challenge for the most able pupils, so that more reach higher levels of attainment.
- Share the good practice in numeracy across the curriculum, so that pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in lessons other than mathematics.
- Set sharper targets for pupils and review them more closely and frequently so that pupils know what levels they have reached and what they need to do to improve further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children arrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage with abilities generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas, particularly in developing their speech and language and social skills, and leave the Reception Year with levels that are almost in line with expectations for their age.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school identifies any special educational needs early and puts in place additional support and access to services so that children have the earliest possible opportunities to see the experts that can help them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics have all been rising steadily year-on-year. Better teaching of reading and access to good resources have improved pupils' ability to decode words and spell. However, the most recent set of results shows that these improvements have not raised pupils' scores in the national phonics check. After investigation and support from experts, the school has identified that this is because pupils struggle to understand the meanings of words, due to their limited English vocabulary. Strategies to meet this need are already in place and are showing a positive impact.
- Pupils' progress in each year is tracked, as a large number of pupils leave or join the school within each year group. All pupils make good progress from their starting points, but those who have been in school the longest attain the highest standards and make at least good progress over time.
- A large proportion of pupils arrive at the school with little or no knowledge of English. Provision put in place for these pupils meets their needs well, and they make good progress from their starting points. It would be unreasonable to expect these pupils to reach the same final levels of attainment as their peers, but the levels they do reach prepare them as well as can be expected for the next stage of their education.
- Provision for pupils with particular educational needs is delivered by well-trained expert staff. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are sometimes taught by teaching assistants in order to meet their requirements, and make at least good progress. In some cases, this group of pupils make faster progress than their peers as they close any gaps in their attainment.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress, and the gap between their attainment and national averages is closing.
- Although there are some gaps between the progress of different groups, for example, between the achievements of girls and boys, this is almost exclusively due to the high number who join and leave within year groups rather than to any issues with equality across teaching and learning. The school manages and promotes equality of opportunity well.
- The levels pupils achieve by the end of Year 6 have been increasing year-on-year, and this year's achievement met the government's current floor standards for the first time. This trend looks set to continue, as the improvements in teaching and learning throughout the school have led to pupils achieving higher levels earlier on in their school career.
- Many pupils are developing the skills and abilities to learn without the need for direct support from adults, and are able to improve their own pieces of work. In a small number of lessons, the most able pupils are not attaining the highest levels of which they are capable.
- Some pupils who are only in school for the last year or two of primary education are helped to catch up with their peers with bespoke programmes of support. These pupils make good progress, but do not always reach the expected attainment for their age. This means that the school's results do not always compare favourably to national figures. However, the provision for and the achievements of these pupils from their starting points are good.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching has secured and sustained improvement to pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages.
- The large number of staff in school means that pupils have ready access to expert adult support and can work in small groups that meet their particular needs well. This has accelerated the rates of progress for pupils, particularly in English and mathematics and for those who are working below levels expected for their age.
- The school has focused on improving pupils' achievement in reading and writing well, and pupils are gaining skills that enable them to access the curriculum as early as possible. Pupils are now writing to a better standard and across different subjects, although the amount that pupils are asked to write could be increased still further to raise the proportion of pupils who reach higher levels.
- The skills pupils gain within mathematics lessons are not always promoted in other subjects. This means that pupils do not appreciate fully the wider application of mathematics.
- Relationships between pupils and all adults in their lessons are very strong. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and to explore; they are supported by good-quality resources and access to the latest technology, which makes them interested and enthusiastic learners.
- The school organises additional experiences on a regular basis to enrich pupils' learning. These include the use of an 'immersion room' where pupils pretend to be in a new environment. For example, the pupils went on a trip to 'the moon' to help them to imagine, write and draw.
- Not all pupils know what levels they have reached or what they need to do to improve. Current targets are too broad (for example, 'to improve my handwriting') and are not detailed enough for pupils to know precisely what they should be aiming for.
- Teachers' assessments of the levels pupils reach have been rigorously checked by a range of external experts. This has enabled the teachers to be confident in the accuracy of their judgements of the progress pupils are making.
- The curriculum includes some unusual lessons, such as philosophy. In these lessons, teachers support pupils' development of social and moral understanding well, and enrich pupils' learning about other cultures and communities. Teachers use these lessons well to broaden pupils' knowledge and skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a welcoming environment and pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic and resilient learners.
- Pupils celebrate good attendance, and the school is proactive in improving attendance and punctuality. Although they are now getting better, they have not yet reached the national average. This is mostly due to a small number of persistent absentees. Additional support services and the learning mentor are working with these families on a long-term basis.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and at break times, and are confident that staff will tackle any incidents of weak behaviour that might occur. There are few concerns from parents and pupils about behaviour, and pupils make friends easily. The shared 'enquiry time' allows pupils to make new friends in different years and classes, and share common interests such as art, sports and computing.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, including online.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are good; for younger pupils particularly, the friendly and fun activities adults provide at playtime ensure they enjoy their time in school and learn important social skills.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Regular visitors to school demonstrate music, dance, drama and art from other cultures; trips and visits to places of interest encourage pupils to discuss and explore the world. These include

astronomy, archaeology and local science and history centres.

- The school has an on-site sports specialist who works not only with the pupils but also with families and the community, and pupils recognise the importance of exercise and healthy living. Adult and child outdoor gym machines are available for use on the playground at the start and end of the school day, and are used regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Regular 'challenge panel' reviews of the school's progress towards key targets have ensured rapid and sustained improvements.
- Leaders' actions have significantly improved pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, and gaps between the achievement of groups of pupils are closing. Middle leaders take responsibility for monitoring improvements, and all staff are passionate about school improvement and enhancing pupils' learning. Access to good-quality training and continuing professional development support all staff to secure improvements in their practice.
- The progress made by all pupils is checked at regular intervals. Pupils who are new to the school have their progress measured to ensure that each pupil is receiving the best possible provision for their particular needs.
- The school's additional staff, who specialise in sport, family support, special educational needs, and the particular needs of pupils, as well as middle leaders responsible for literacy, numeracy and other subjects, support pupils' development needs well. This means that training and time can be tailored to the needs of pupils and staff well, and the school provides good value for money to its pupils and the community.
- The school is well supported by the local authority, networks of local schools and a national leader of education. The ongoing bespoke programme of training, review and challenge has helped the school to secure improvements, and staff to gain the skills needed to sustain these year-on-year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an in-depth and accurate view of the school's performance, using regular evaluations of the quality of teaching and data on pupils' progress. They regularly review and challenge the school to improve, and work closely to monitor the success of any changes to provision. The governing body manages finances closely, including the pupil premium and primary school sport funding, to ensure there is value for money and that pupils benefit directly from spending. Teachers' pay is closely linked to performance and the quality of teaching over time has improved.
 - Governors have high expectations; they have attended a large number of training events and meetings and have a broad range of expertise. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	136118
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	430979

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	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Monica Mason
Headteacher	Kitty Davies
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
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