

Banks Road Primary School

Banks Road, Garston, Liverpool, Merseyside , L19 8JZ

Inspection dates

11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils achieve well. In 2013, pupils in Key Stage 2 made particularly good progress in writing and mathematics and outstanding progress in reading. Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium made better progress than other pupils nationally.
- Teaching is good in all key stages and there are examples of outstanding practice in Key Stage 2. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are strong.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a major strength. The school provides excellent emotional support for those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Pupils value this and say, 'We trust the staff. They are always there for us when we need them.'
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They are polite and welcoming to visitors, for example opening doors for them. They are very proud of their school and of everyone connected with it. They feel safe, enjoy taking on responsibilities and 'junior leaders' look after and play with younger ones.
- The relatively new headteacher, fully supported by talented senior and middle leaders, has introduced strategies to improve all aspects of school life. Leaders have ensured that teaching and achievement are good, pupils are punctual and that attendance has improved.
- Governors know the school well and are challenging the leadership with increasing rigour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although improving, pupils' verbal skills are not yet developed well enough to enable them to be prepared fully for writing.
- Children and younger pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to speak and learn in more imaginative play areas outdoors.
- Pupils' use of new technology to motivate them to want to write is underdeveloped.
- Pupils are not always given enough time to respond to comments in teachers' marking.
- On occasions, teachers' questioning does not require pupils to think more deeply about their work so they can give extended answers and reasons for their views.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 part-lessons. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. They also observed two assemblies and visited a small-group session designed to offer emotional support for pupils in Key Stage 2. In addition, they listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils, including school councillors and the head boy and head girl. They also held discussions with Chair and Vice-Chair and other members of the governing body. They spoke with the School Improvement Partner, subject co-ordinators and members of the senior leadership team.
- They took account of the views expressed in the 19 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and in the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also spoke informally with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and considered internal and external pupil progress and attainment data and work in pupils' books. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including school development planning, the school's view of its own performance and minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, they looked at documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jim Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Docking

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a broadly average-sized primary school, with slightly more boys than girls. Pupil numbers have increased by over 25% since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is high, at twice the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Banks Road Primary has Healthy School Status, Investors in People and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and a restructuring of the senior leadership team.
- The school receives support from a national leader of education, who is the School Improvement Partner.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to promote pupils' skills in using the spoken word in order to ensure that they are better prepared for writing across the school, but particularly in Key Stage 1, by:
 - developing more opportunities for children in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 to speak and learn through more experiences in the outdoor areas
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning in class requires pupils to think more deeply about their work and to give reasons for their answers
 - giving pupils, as they have requested, more opportunities to talk to each other about the books they are reading at home and at school
 - extending the use of new technology, such as filming their activities, to motivate them to want to write about their learning better
 - providing enough time for pupils to respond to the feedback in teachers' comments in the marking of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are low in relation to their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning, but are still below the expected level of development by the time they enter Year 1.
- This good progress continues across the rest of the school and, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. In 2013, attainment in reading was above average, which demonstrated outstanding progress in this subject. Indeed, in Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read aloud with confidence and are fully aware of how to split up more complex words in order to pronounce them correctly. Pupils enjoy reading and understand its value to their learning in other subjects.
- In 2012 and 2013, pupils' performance in writing in Key Stage 1 was below expectations, because their verbal skills were not developed well enough to help them prepare for their writing assignments. Attainment in writing is beginning to improve, mainly as a result of the school's emphasis on encouraging pupils to talk more about their work.
- The school is also developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. In the impressive music assembly, for example, they were encouraged to understand the meaning of the words 'dynamism' and 'diction' prior to them singing their songs.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils express themselves well orally and on occasions outstandingly well. In Year 5, for example, they use 'furthermore' quite naturally and in context and can change a line of argument by using 'however.' In Year 6, their use of language is above that usually found: the most able pose rhetorical questions and discuss different styles of writing with an accuracy which belies their years. In mathematics, too, pupils, including the most able, are progressing well and use ratio, proportion, decimals and fractions with confidence.
- As a result of well-considered use of pupil premium funding, for example, to employ an extra teacher and teaching assistant, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good, and sometimes outstanding progress as that of their classmates. In 2013, pupils supported by the pupil premium made better progress than that of other pupils nationally and reached broadly average standards in both English and mathematics.
- As a result of excellent support from teachers, mentors and teaching assistants, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, both academically and personally. In 2013, some pupils with special educational needs made outstanding progress. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good overall and in all key stages. There are examples of outstanding practice in Key Stage 2. Relationships in the classroom are strong, pupils enjoy learning and all groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are given effective support from teachers and teaching assistants to enable them to take full advantage of what the lessons have to offer.
- Teachers' planning is good and contains detailed information on how pupils' work is to be assessed.
- Pupils' progress is sometimes not as rapid as it could be when teachers' questioning requires only brief answers. However, they make good and even better progress when they are challenged to think more deeply about the subject they are studying and when teachers' questioning requires them to give reasons for their answers.
- In a Year 6 English lesson for example, 'Why?' questions abounded and pupils rose willingly to the challenge and presented balanced views on school uniform which would not have gone amiss in Year 7 of the secondary school. They also challenged themselves to express arguments

in different ways and demonstrated their concern to ensure that they punctuated their written work with the utmost accuracy. The most-able pupils, for example, explained exactly how a semi-colon should be used and also when a comma is not appropriate.

- Similarly, pupils achieve well, particularly in writing, when they are given opportunities to talk about their ideas in pairs before they begin their written assignments. This enables them to share their ideas and also to learn from each other.
- Pupils value the use of the visualiser, which enables their written work to be shown to the whole class. School leaders are now looking to extend the use of new technology to film pupils' activities, in order to motivate them to want to write about their work.
- Marking is good overall and pupils are congratulated on their effort and achievement. They also receive detailed comment on how they can improve their work. Too often, however, they are not given enough time to respond to the advice they have been given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct and engagement in learning are excellent. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school and show the utmost courtesy to other pupils, to the adults who work with them and to visitors. They are delighted to show visitors their work, which adorns the corridors and make sure that visitors do not lose their way in the building. Inspectors lost count of the number of times pupils greeted them warmly and also opened doors for them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View and all of those spoken to informally during the inspection believe that their children are safe and happy in school. As one parent commented, 'Our children grow in confidence as they move through the school.' School councillors and other pupils are of the same opinion and speak confidently about the security of the site, the support they receive from adults and also of the dangers of using the Internet.
- Staff undergo intense training to identify and support those pupils who are potentially vulnerable and mentors deliver a range of small-group sessions to ensure that they are emotionally secure. Staff work closely with families to offer support when needed and to help them support their children's learning, for example, by reading at home. The termly coffee mornings encourage parents to visit school and to discuss any problems they may have.
- Indeed, pupils demonstrate the immense pride in their school, in their classmates and in their teachers, mentors and support assistants. They find it difficult to give any opinions about how their school could be improved, except to say, 'We love reading and the school gives us so many opportunities to read during the day. However, we would like to spend more time talking to other pupils about what we like to read.'
- Pupils believe bullying is very rare indeed, but that when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. They have a keen understanding of the different forms bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and bullying based on prejudice.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong, are sensitive to the feelings of others, and, as 'junior leaders', take pride in supporting their younger counterparts, children in the Nursery and Reception. They are proactive in the support for a wide range of charities and one pupil even donated some of her hair to the Princess Trust, in order that it could be used to make wigs for people undergoing chemotherapy. Music is an important part of school life and the 'singing assembly' is a highlight of the week: boys and girls sing beautifully and their voices are a joy to hear.
- Attendance has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good and characterised by strong teamwork at all levels. Staff have a high regard for the committed headteacher and talented senior team who, they say, 'Support us to the full but also hold us to account. We feel valued here.'
- The school knows itself well and has an accurate and honest view of its own performance. It recognises, for example, that the outdoor area, used by youngsters in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1, does not always provide a wide enough range of experiences for children to speak and learn using their imagination.
- Subject coordinators lead the areas for which they responsible well. They produce detailed documentation on subject development and provide non-specialist staff with resources and advice to enable them to enhance their teaching.
- Staff believe that performance appraisal arrangements are robust but fair, are founded on the national Teacher Standards and are directly linked to pupil progress. They add that the outcomes lead to relevant in-service training opportunities.
- The curriculum meets the needs, interests and aspirations of pupils well. Although senior leaders are aware that pupils' verbal and writing skills in Key Stage 1 are not as well-developed as they could be, the appointment of a vocal coach is helping pupils to pronounce words correctly and to become more fluent in their speech. As a result, they are now becoming better prepared for their writing assignments.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors. In addition, primary sport funding is used well to employ a specialist physical education (PE) teacher, who works alongside school staff to help them enhance their skills and confidence in teaching PE. The funding is also used to ensure more pupil participation in sports.
- Child protection policies and practice meet current requirements fully. The school rejects all forms of discrimination and equality of opportunity for all is good.
- The school receives strong support from the local authority through the School Improvement Partner, who is also a national leader of education. This person has mentored the headteacher following his appointment and the local authority has also provided support for developments within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors support the school well, have an accurate view of its performance and are asking increasingly challenging questions of the leadership about all aspects of school life. Governors, leaders and staff 'speak with one voice' about the main purpose of the school, which is to do everything it can to promote the well-being, both academic and personal, of each individual pupil. Governors scrutinise data about pupils' achievement and they monitor progress and attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. They keep a close eye on the spending of pupil premium funding and make accurate comments about the impact of this spending on the academic and personal progress of pupils known to be eligible for support through it. Governors are fully aware of how the school attempts to improve the quality of teaching and visit lessons to observe how well pupils are learning. They also oversee performance appraisal arrangements and ensure that staff receive financial reward only if they meet their classroom targets for pupil progress.

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	104516
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	440700

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hepple
Headteacher	Glen Hartford
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2011
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