

Mesne Lea Primary School

Walkden Road, Worsley, Manchester, Lancashire, M28 7FG

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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, parents and carers and staff all agree that Mesne Lea is now a good school.
- Senior leaders have created dynamic staff teams that share the same vision and high expectations for the school and pupils. The impact is a significant improvement in teaching, in pupils' attendance and behaviour, and in their achievement.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is good and one of the strengths of the school. Children achieve well and start Year 1 with above-average standards for five-year-olds.
- All the different groups of pupils across the school achieve well and reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Their achievement in some other subjects is a strength, for example in art and design and in design and technology.
- Pupils' behaviour is much improved and is now good. There is a calm atmosphere around the school and in most lessons.
- Mesne Lea is an inclusive school, demonstrated by pupils working and playing together happily regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnic heritage. Pupils feel safe and protected.
- There are particular strengths in teaching that have been instrumental in raising standards, such as teaching pupils, in small ability groups, phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).
- Teaching is particularly good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have good oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses through much more detailed and frequent checks. There is good leadership of teaching linked to well-thought out training and using expertise from out of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' skills and achievement are not as good as they could be when using information and communication technology (ICT). This is mainly because there are not many opportunities in lessons for them to apply their skills.
- Staff are not in a position to assess pupils' achievement accurately in subjects such as ICT, music, geography and history to use these assessments to plan more challenging activities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited every class in the school to observe teaching and learning. They observed 10 lessons, an assembly and watched seven sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The deputy headteacher joined a team member for four of the observations.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff who lead subjects. They met with a representative of the local authority and six members of the governing body. They also talked to a range of staff including teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, canteen staff, office staff and teachers.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 57 parents and carers who completed Ofsted’s online survey through Parent View, a parental complaint to Ofsted, and the school’s own surveys of parents.
- They met with five groups of pupils and spoke with other pupils around the school. Inspectors took into account the views of pupils through the school’s own surveys.
- The inspectors took into account the views of members of staff through discussions and through the 27 replies to the Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors completed an in-depth analysis of Year 6 pupils’ work and shorter analyses of pupils’ work in Year 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. They looked through the school’s documentation and policies.
- At the time of the inspection, all of Year 6 were out on a residential visit accompanied by three staff.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Jean Tarry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mesne Lea is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British and approximately one in 12 pupils is from a minority ethnic heritage.
- Approximately a quarter of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. (This is a grant of money from the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and are deemed to need extra help. These are at the school action stage. Similarly, a lower than average proportion is at the stage called school action plus. This is when pupils receive extra help and support from specialist staff outside of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.
- No pupil is educated off the school site.
- There are no pupils with a registered disability.
- In 2012 and 2013 the school met the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has received support since the previous inspection from a National Leader in Education and a School Improvement Partner who is a trained Ofsted additional inspector.
- There is an on-site breakfast and after-school club, which is not managed by the governing body and so did not form part of this inspection. This club receives a separate inspection and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' ICT skills and enable them to be better prepared for their futures by:
 - applying their ICT skills in each subject to reason and to solve problems
 - enabling pupils to use ICT as a rapid and effective form of communication.
- Develop and use a system to assess and raise pupils' achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics to:
 - enable staff to plan lessons that challenge all groups of pupils
 - enable staff to extend pupils' writing and mathematical skills in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and levels of development that are typical for children of this age. They make good progress and achieve well reaching levels of development at the end of Reception that are above the national average. In phonics, for example, the most able pupils in Nursery made rapid progress practising their writing skills outdoors on large rolled paper. In Reception, children learnt how to make a cup of tea and then in large and small groups wrote instructions using their knowledge of phonics. The resulting sentences with correct and almost-correct spellings indicated good achievement.
- From their starting points at the beginning of Year 1 pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average. In particular, standards in reading and writing are above average and this could be seen in pupils' work. At the start of Year 1, for example, pupils could write simple sentences correctly demarcated with full stops, but by the end of the year pupils were writing well-formed sentences with correct grammar and good examples of adjectives and adverbs. By the end of Year 6 pupils showed they could write to a good standard in different styles of writing.
- The proportion of pupils that make the expected two levels progress in Key Stage 2 is well-above average as is the proportion that makes more than two levels progress.
- Around the school there are many examples of high-quality art and design technology. Pupils learn different techniques from emulating the style of artists and then adapting them skilfully to create their own. The display of painted and real leaves, for example, around trees in the style of Andy Goldsworthy is excellent and the sculptures inspired by the work of Alberto Giacometti are high quality for primary aged pupils. It is also good to see some female artists used as role models, for example, the work of Elizabeth Berrien.
- The main reason why achievement is not outstanding is because pupils' achievement in some other subjects is not as good as it could be, in particular in ICT. This is because there are not as many chances as there could be for them to practise and extend their skills of communication using ICT. Pupils told inspectors that the computers and other devices are timetabled weekly and are often not charged or not working, which hinders their progress. In mathematics, geography and science, for example, there are missed opportunities to use ICT to develop and improve reasoning and problem solving.
- Throughout the school children with special educational needs achieve well. This in part is because teachers have high expectations. These pupils are expected to learn as much as other pupils and the staff work hard to close the gap between them and the other pupils. As a result the gap has closed in most year groups and in most subjects from being two years behind other pupils to just over a year behind.
- Boys achieve as well as girls at Mesne Lea, and pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as other pupils. By the end of Year 6 in 2013 for example, every pupil premium pupil made two levels progress between Year 3 and Year 6 and a higher-than-average proportion made more than two levels progress. As a result they attained higher than those not supported by the pupil premium.
- Any barriers to pupils' progress are quickly identified and tackled. Teachers make no excuses for low achievement, they find ways around the barrier to make sure every child achieves. As a result they tackle any form of discrimination well and make sure there is equality of opportunity.
- The most able pupils across the school are now challenged. As one pupil said, 'Work used to be easy now it is harder and more challenging and we have to think, it is more fun.' A group of the most able pupils spoke to inspectors. They knew the level they were working on and what they had to do to attain the next level. By the end of Year 2, a higher proportion of pupils now attain the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics, and by the end of Year 6 around half of pupils are on course for the higher Level 5 with some assessed at Level 6, which is equivalent to the level pupils should be at the end of Year 8 in the secondary school.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The well-designed environment helps adults to teach the key skills children need to be ready for school. For example, they learn to choose the wellies and protective clothing they need from the racks of equipment before creating mud pictures or mud food in the mud kitchen. There is a good balance between children choosing activities themselves and adults directing and extending their learning. As a result there is an aim and a purpose to most activities and children make good progress.
- The teaching in reading, writing, art and design technology is a strength of the school. Pupils are taught the skills they need to progress to the next level. Teachers model and demonstrate well and have high expectations. In Year 6 pupils' art work, for example, it is clear they are taught the techniques in how to draw and paint and they apply these skills by creating high-quality pieces of art.
- Teachers teach phonics in small groups in a progressive and systematic way. In one group, for example, with middle-ability pupils, teaching skilfully combined speaking, reading, writing and listening to consolidate and improve their use of phonics in reading. By the end of the lesson almost every pupil was spelling complex words such as 'treasure' and 'school' accurately. In reading, pupils are introduced to a wide range of books and are asked to read frequently by adults and teachers across all subjects. They are asked searching questions, which makes them think about characters, settings, plot lines and the use of vocabulary by the author.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is a strength of the school. Pupils are taught by the mathematics specialist, English or art specialist, which means they get high-quality instruction by teachers with a high level of knowledge in the subjects they are teaching. The questions they ask pupils are searching and challenge them to think, explain and to apply their thinking to different scenarios. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, the most able pupils were challenged to predict, comment and develop opinions emanating from the information text.
- Most teaching enthuses, motivates and engages pupils and makes sure no learning time is lost. Pupils are eager to learn in these lessons, take on advice from well-deployed additional adults, and concentrate on their work because the tasks and activities are interesting. In a history lesson, for example, Year 1 pupils worked cooperatively and eagerly, identifying the differences between seaside holidays at different points in the past through a range of well-crafted activities.
- Most teachers and adults use questions well to gauge and check on pupils' understanding throughout the lesson and to make them think or deepen their understanding. In a Year 4 science lesson, for example, the teacher asked questions to identify pupils' understanding of how to conduct a fair test, and to check their understanding of the balance in composition between fruit and sugar. As a result of the questioning and the teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress, they made good progress.
- In most classes and in most subjects the activities pupils are asked to do by teachers are interesting and are challenging. In Year 1 and 2, however, in some subjects such as science, history and geography, pupils' progress is hampered because of the occasional use of low-level, non-challenging worksheets that only require being coloured in or adding a word or phrase.
- In most classes, the feedback children get throughout the lesson and through marking helps them to improve their next piece of work. Teachers often leave corrections or a learning challenge and give pupils time to correct or improve their work or complete an extension. As a result pupils are positive about the way their work is marked and assessed and they say it helps them to make progress.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well, according to most parents and carers, staff and pupils. Inspectors agree. There is a calm and respectful atmosphere around the school in corridors, at break times,

walking to and from lessons and at the start and the end of the day.

- The number of serious behaviour incidents has reduced significantly in the last three years. There are a few pupils who have some significant behaviour needs. These are dealt with well and there are examples of this work improving individual pupils' behaviour so that by the end of Year 6 they behave well and have good attitudes.
- During lessons, pupils in most classes behave well and respond positively to different adults, whether they are experienced teachers, students, teaching assistants, canteen staff, office staff or inspectors. In most classes, pupils' positive attitudes and eagerness to learn has a positive impact on their progress. They show good manners and respect for others and listen carefully to others' views and contributions. The number of incidents of poor behaviour at lunchtime has reduced and only a few incidents now occur. More equipment, more things for pupils to do, including an exciting quiet area and better training for staff, have begun to work. More training is planned for September.
- The school's work to ensure pupils are safe and secure is good.
- Attendance has risen and the proportion of pupils who are absent and missing out too much of their education has reduced significantly in the last year. This is because every absence is questioned and followed up. There is a good system in place to find out where all pupils are when they are not at school, including those who have left the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and well protected in school through measures such as warning them about dangers in the local area, maintaining a secure perimeter fence and good security measures. Parents, carers and staff also said they felt pupils were safe at school.
- The number of staff monitoring break times has risen, which has led to a reduction in accidents and to improvements in behaviour. There are good systems in place to train staff in first aid as well as child protection and how to safeguard pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe when using social media and the internet. They also know some good personal safety techniques. They are less knowledgeable about other forms of safety such as rail, road and water safety or safety from extremism, gangs, substance misuse or crime. The cycling safety scheme has helped pupils be more aware of safety when riding their bikes.
- Pupils feel safe from being bullied. They told inspectors that incidents of different types of bullying are rare, such as excluding pupils from friendship groups, racism, name calling and physical violence. In some younger age groups a few pupils use the term 'gay' to mean something not very good or nice. Older pupils however said these immature pupils soon grow out of it and learn not to judge others for being different and celebrate differences in people. The school's anti-bullying work has been effective but the school does not always make sure it covers all types of bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- 'I feel very proud to work at this school, the support is fantastic and we are a motivated team.' This is the typical comment from a member of staff and it exemplifies the school's ethos that has been created by the highly capable headteacher. There is a determination, throughout all levels of leadership, to head for excellence. As another member of staff commented, 'It is exciting to be part of the team. We all share the same desire and vision for the school.'
- The deputy headteacher is a skilled and capable leader. From an accurate self-evaluation of the impact of teaching that is based on data, observations, work and planning scrutinies, she has led improvements in teaching. The management of teachers' performance is non-threatening but effective. There is a good link between performance and salary progression.
- Subject leaders check on the quality of teaching and create purposeful action plans aimed at improving pupils' achievement. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, the leader identified from data that children's achievement would be improved if there were more activities and better teaching of moving and handling. As a result of the action taken, children's achievement has improved. Some subject leaders are hindered in their monitoring by a lack of

assessment in their subjects, particularly subjects such as ICT, history, geography, physical education and music. As a result they have not been able to lead improvements. Consequently, teachers are unable to use the assessments to plan lessons that will raise achievement of different groups of pupils in those subjects.

- There is good focus in the curriculum on English and mathematics. However, there are not enough opportunities to develop ICT skills which will help pupils in their future lives and careers. There is an extensive range of out-of-school activities including sports, crafts and languages. As a result of the good curriculum, pupils have good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Walking through the school, for example, you see all around you examples of pupils' good work when studying Judaism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism and some elements of paganism. Through the curriculum, pupils are asked to reflect about different issues, for example, in history, they think about why people invade other people's land and in art they design and create prayer mats.
- The school buys in sports coaches using the sport premium. This is a grant from the government aimed at improving sport. There is some impact from the grant. For example, after the cricket coach had been to school a few pupils joined a cricket club and started playing after school. The governing body does not measure the impact of the grant well enough.
- The school works with parents and carers well. In the Nursery, for example, an exciting new software application for the telephone, tablets and other devices, allows parents to upload observations or pictures of children at home, which immediately gets added to the school's information about the child's skills and development. Similarly parents, by checking the application, can see immediately on their telephones what children have done in the Nursery, so that when they pick them up from school they can discuss their activities and achievements.
- The school's systems to check on whether staff can work with pupils meet current government requirements. Protecting and safeguarding pupils are high priorities. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to train staff and to protect children whilst they are in school.
- The school has made outstanding progress in a short space of time and its capacity to improve further is a strength. The school has made significant improvements to pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, to teaching, and to systems to check the quality of what the school does. The data and tracking of pupils' progress has improved but more importantly it is now used to close gaps between the performance of groups of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium. Some of these improvements are also down to the good level of support from the local authority and other external partners such as a National Leader in Education and a School Improvement Partner.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body who spoke to inspectors are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They meet frequently and have a good oversight over the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and of the school. They have access to and scrutinise data about pupils' performance in depth and have a good grasp over strengths in achievement in English and mathematics. They now need a similar grasp over pupils' achievement in all subjects. They visit classes and lessons, take advice from external consultants and they question senior leaders. The level of support and challenge to the school is good and they are determined to consider many sources of information before making a judgement. They have evaluated their own skills and the impact they have had on improving the school. The governing body has a good grip on how the money is spent and on, for example, how the pupil premium money is spent and its impact on pupils' achievement.

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	105911
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	442349

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	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Cowpe
Headteacher	Julie Finlay
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2013
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