

Mosscroft Primary School

Bedford Close, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 1XH

Inspection dates

6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There has not been enough time for leaders' actions to secure sufficient improvements in pupils' progress to promote good achievement.
- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across all year groups, particularly in writing. The legacy of low attainment is still hindering achievement.
- There have been many changes in staffing and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Although the quality of teaching is improving, not enough teaching is consistently good.
- Teachers do not always give pupils work that is demanding enough to stretch their abilities, particularly boys and the most able.
- Not all marking helps pupils to improve their work effectively. Teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to the advice given.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in different subjects. This slows pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough of pupils' handwriting and general presentation of their work. This results in a few pupils showing a lack of pride in their work.
- Plans for improving teaching and achievement are not always effective enough. This is because it is unclear how the impact of some of the actions will be measured.
- Not all middle leaders are effective enough in improving teaching and the achievement of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a happy, inclusive and caring school.
- The headteacher shows a passionate and steely determination to improve the school. Staff and governors share her vision for improvement.
- The progress of current pupils is improving and standards are rising. This is because weaknesses in teaching and the underachievement of pupils are being tackled robustly.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported, resulting in their improving achievement.
- Children in the early years make good progress due to consistently good teaching and skilled leadership.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are happy and feel safe and say staff are caring and kind.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support. They have helped to secure improvements in teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Pupils have a good appreciation of British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes across school.
- The inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in lessons, in a wide range of books and on display around school. Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke often to pupils during the inspection and met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of school. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. Inspectors met with governors, including the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's own view of its performance, plans for improvement, policies and procedures. Inspectors made very careful checks on records of the progress of pupils, their behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also checked closely on the work of governors and on a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors consulted the online Parent View website but as only eight responses had been received, the results are not included in this report. However, inspectors spoke to parents to gain their views and considered the responses to the school's own surveys of parental opinion.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in the 19 responses to the voluntary inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Howard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and governors since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who that speak English as an additional language is low compared to the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is high compared to the national average. The pupil premium is government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school nursery operates part-time, either for mornings or afternoons. Children attend the Reception class full time.
- The school shares the site with Hilltop Children's Centre. This is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports for this setting may be viewed at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the Aqua Family of Schools, which is a group of five local schools. The school has particularly close links with Lord Derby Academy, Knowsley.
- The school has a number of awards, including the international school Award, presented by the British Council.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise the achievement of pupils, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - work is always pitched at the right level to challenge the abilities of all pupils, particularly the most able and boys
 - the school's marking policy is implemented consistently to help pupils improve their work
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to use and extend their writing skills across all subjects
 - expectations of the way pupils present their work and of the standard of their handwriting are always high.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - actions planned by leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, are always crystal clear in how their impact will be measured
 - middle leaders, particularly those new to role, develop the skills they need to implement their ideas and check on their effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Progress since the previous inspection has been hindered by a large turnover of staff and long-term absence. This significant staff turbulence has meant that planned improvements by senior leaders have not been fully implemented. Senior leaders have not been able to establish consistently good teaching and achievement across the school.
- The achievement of different groups in Key Stages 1 and 2 is inconsistent. However, although senior leaders acknowledge the need to provide more challenging learning for boys and the most able, they are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all.
- The headteacher, effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, shows a passionate drive and unyielding determination to continuously improve the school. Decisive actions to raise expectations, address the legacy of underachievement and weaknesses in teaching are showing increasing success as staffing is becoming more stable.
- The instability in staffing has been managed well and the headteacher has galvanised staff and governors in sharing her vision for steering a path of continuous improvement. As a result, staff morale is high. A typical staff comment was, 'Senior leaders give great provision for professional development and support along the way.'
- Senior and middle leaders are focused on the right priorities to move the school forward. However, their plans to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils do not always show precisely how the effectiveness of their actions will be measured.
- Checks by senior leaders on teaching are more rigorous. Teachers benefit from skilled guidance on how to improve and opportunities to observe good practice in school and in other schools. However, inconsistencies remain in teachers' ability to plan work that sufficiently challenges the abilities of all pupils.
- Robust and regular checks are now being made by senior leaders on the progress of all groups of pupils. Any pupils in danger of underachieving are identified quickly and supported. However, although current pupils are doing better, with more pupils working at the higher levels, inconsistencies remain.
- Good use is made of extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The targeted support given by additional teaching assistants and the school's learning mentor has led to pupils making improved progress. The attainment gap between such pupils and others not eligible for support through the funding is closing.
- Middle leaders, including those new to role, share the drive for improvement. However, they are not all completely effective in checking the success of their actions to improve teaching and learning.
- Subjects are linked together in highly creative and stimulating ways to help engage pupils in exploring exciting topics. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of visits, visitors, residential and clubs.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and good relationships are fostered across school by the strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils celebrate and appreciate different cultures and faiths. Pupils do project work with other pupils across the globe as part of its International School award.
- Pupils' knowledge of British values is enhanced through first-hand experience of democratic elections to the school council and themed weeks such as 'Diversity Week' which focus on individual rights and freedoms. They regularly take on responsibilities and work with staff to create school rules.
- The sport funding is used effectively to employ specialist coaches to improve staff confidence and competence and increased opportunities for pupils to develop skills and participation in clubs and competitive sports. There is clear evidence that pupils' well-being is growing.
- Strong links exist with parents. A typical parental comment was, 'This is a happy family school and it's important to our community.'
- The school has close links with the local 'Aqua Family of Schools'. This has helped the school improve teaching and learning. Strong links which exist with the local Derby Academy have led to help with support for gifted and talented pupils and the provision of specialist sport coaching.
- The school is receiving good-quality support from the local authority in making improvements in leadership, teaching and achievement.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. Clear and well-founded policies and procedures are in place. Regular checks by senior leaders and governors ensure they are effective. Staff and governors are trained to the appropriate levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body provide effective leadership. Governors share the

headteacher's passion and drive for improvement. They provide increasingly rigorous challenge and support to senior leaders and this has helped tackle the legacy of pupils' underachievement and some underperformance of staff.

- Governors are linked to classes and visit regularly to check that the improvements in teaching and learning are working. They have a good understanding of the data in relation to the progress of different groups and how these compare to other pupils locally and nationally.
- Governors ensure that teachers' pay progression is closely linked to pupils making at least good progress and have clear systems for rewarding good or better teaching. Governors keep a watchful eye on school finances and ensure extra funding for disadvantaged pupils and physical education and sports has the impact on pupils it should. Governors check the school's safeguarding practices to ensure they reflect school policies. These checks are effective in ensuring that safeguarding policies and practice meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and enjoy school. They typically say, 'I like this school because all the staff are nice, friendly and support us. Because it's a small school, we all know each other and get along.' Pupils' positive attitudes and eagerness to learn contribute well to their improving progress. Punctuality is good and attendance is broadly average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They eagerly talked to inspectors about the school 'Golden Rules' for behaviour they have helped to draw up and just how important these are to follow.
- Pupils listen attentively to teachers, enjoy working with partners and relish the chance to investigate and work on challenging tasks. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are sometimes outstanding. This is when work is highly stimulating, captures their interests and makes them think hard. However, when work is too easy or too hard, a few pupils, mainly boys and the most able lose interest and drift off task. This hinders the progress they make.
- Pupils' highly positive and trusting relationships with staff help to boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence to try their best. They say staff, particular the headteacher, care about them as individuals. They typically say, 'Our headteacher is brilliant; she always cheers you up when you are upset.'
- Pupils are welcoming and respectful to visitors. They enjoy the wide range of responsibilities on offer, such as being a school counsellor or anti-bullying ambassador. Pupils who act as peer mentors help pupils at break times to resolve any disagreements amicably. They enjoy learning French and attending a wide range of clubs such as reading, singing, multi-sports, football and film club. They also enjoy entering sports competitions such as in cross country running.
- Pupils demonstrate a good appreciation of cultural differences and understand the rights of people to hold different beliefs. In their words, 'We are all the same but different. Everyone should be treated with respect and treat people as you want to be treated yourself.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they show a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils receive good quality support in their appreciation of the potential dangers posed by strangers or when using the internet. A typical comment from pupils was, 'Don't share any personal information on the internet.'
- Pupils show a strong awareness and understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, such as cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They learn a great deal from anti-bullying assemblies. They say that bullying does not happen, but that if it did they are confident staff would deal with it fairly.
- Parents are confident their children feel safe. This is reflected in their discussions with inspectors and in responses to the school's own surveys of their views. 100% of the 35 responses to a recent survey agreed that their children feel safe.
- The school has robust systems in place to ensure that the adults who work with pupils are rigorously vetted. Regular checks are made to ensure the site is safe and secure.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Although teaching is improving in Key Stages 1 and 2, it is still too variable and not yet consistently good. As a result, not enough pupils make good progress and reach the standards they are capable of by the time they leave Year 6, particularly in writing.
- Teachers do not always give work to pupils that is demanding enough to challenge their different abilities and interests, particularly boys and the most able. This slows the progress pupils make.
- Senior leaders have introduced a very clear marking policy and some teachers are responding well to the challenge to ensure marking consistently helps pupils improve their work and to check they have done so. However, not all teachers are implementing the policy consistently, slowing the progress of pupils.
- The teaching of writing is improving due to the whole-school focus on identifying and sharing what makes good writing. Pupils have good opportunities to talk about their ideas, assess their own work and to work with partners to identify improvements. However, although progress in writing is improving, it is at a slower rate than in reading and mathematics. This is a result of pupils not always being given work that fully meets their learning needs. In addition, teachers do not always encourage pupils to use and extend their writing skills when working in other subjects.
- The standard of handwriting and general presentation of work by a few pupils is not good enough. This is because not all staff consistently show high levels of expectation of what is acceptable.
- Staff have highly trusting and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils like their caring approach and the way staff get to know them as individuals. Pupils who need extra help benefit from skilled support.
- Improvements to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in Key Stage 1 have led to improvements in pupils' progress in reading. Year 2 pupils show an eagerness to read and increasing accuracy and understanding. During the inspection, the most able pupils were able to read and spell tricky words accurately. Reading skills are taught systematically across the school and pupils' love of reading is nurtured successfully.
- Teachers regularly review and consolidate basic skills in mathematics. A strong emphasis is placed on the mastery of concepts through practical problem-solving and pupils talking about the strategies they use.
- When work precisely matches pupils' abilities, captures their interests makes them think hard, pupils are eager to succeed. This was evident in the work of Year 6 pupils who enthusiastically worked out percentages of different amounts of money and confidently explained which they would prefer to receive. Most able pupils worked on much harder challenges to deepen their understanding.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and attainment is not high enough over time by the end of Year 6, particularly in writing. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve and the quality of teaching have varied too much between classes.
- In 2014, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was significantly below average overall and in reading and writing. The proportions of pupils making at least expected progress and the proportions exceeding expected progress from the standards they reached in Year 2 were variable.
- Although attainment was significantly above average in mathematics in Year 2, it was below average overall and in reading and significantly below average in writing.
- The progress of pupils in most classes, especially boys and the most able, last year was not good enough, particularly in writing.
- Over time, the achievement of the most able pupils has not been good enough. Although the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels was above average in mathematics in Year 2 in 2014, too few attained such levels in reading and particularly in writing. In Year 6, not enough pupils reached the higher levels in reading, mathematics and especially in writing as evidenced in the 2014 national tests. The most able pupils in some classes are now making better progress because they receive work that challenges their thinking and stretches their abilities. However this remains inconsistent, particularly in writing. Teachers do not always plan work that is demanding enough to accelerate their learning.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was three terms ahead of other pupils in the school in mathematics, two and a half terms behind in reading and half a term ahead in writing. Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, pupils were four terms behind in mathematics and three terms behind in reading and writing. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was similar to other pupils nationally in reading, but below below in writing and mathematics and well below in reading. However, the gaps in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others in school are narrowing rapidly and their progress is now improving apace.

- The school's own data, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that the progress of current pupils across school is improving. Attainment is rising and more pupils are now working at the higher levels, especially in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making good progress. This is because of early identification of need and well targeted support. The progress of the few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English is also improving due to precisely targeted support.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in the Year 1 screening check on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in 2014 was well below average. However, improved teaching of phonics is helping pupils make up for lost ground and progress is now accelerating. Pupils continue to develop their skills and love of reading as they move through school.
- Progress in writing is accelerating due to a greater focus on drafting and re-drafting, improved teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling and more opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas.
- Pupils are showing increasing confidence in their use of basic mathematical skills. Their mastery of mathematical concepts is improving due to opportunities they are given to discuss the most efficient strategies to use to solve problems. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is improving.

The early years provision is good

- Only a very small number of children start Nursery with the skills typical for their age. Particular weaknesses are evident in children's language, communication, reading, writing and physical development. However, because of the good teaching and support they receive, all children, including the most able and those with special educational needs make at least good progress and achieve well from their different starting points.
- In 2014, the proportion of children in reception reaching a good level of development was well below the national average. However, all children, including the very high number with special educational needs, made at least good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in communication and language, personal and physical development. A much larger proportion of children in the Reception class this year are currently on track to reach a good level of development in 2015. Although their level of skills and knowledge is below expectations, they are better prepared for Year 1 because of the good progress being made.
- Children settle quickly due to well-established routines and strong links with parents and pre-school settings. Staff are highly caring and provide a nurturing environment where they get to know the children - and their parents. Parents contribute to their children's learning, such as by using home school record books or by 'stay and play' sessions. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. A typical parent comment was, 'I am so pleased to know how well my child has come on over the year.'
- Consistently good teaching ensures children's learning is well planned and precisely targeted to meet their different learning needs. Regular assessments mean activities are well targeted to move learning on effectively. Children needing extra help are identified early so they get the help they need to improve.
- Children enjoy a good mixture of learning opportunities led by adults or chosen by themselves. They enthusiastically follow their interests, such as in the digging and planting area or when threading to music in the 'Funky Fingers' area. They listen carefully to adults and follow instructions sensibly, such as when exploring the sounds different musical instruments can make. Children know how to stay safe and they behave well.
- Children's reading and writing skills are well promoted. Children are encouraged to talk about their ideas and become 'star' writers as they pick up tips on how to produce 'super sentences'. They get opportunities to use the internet to send Easter cards to children in other countries via the school's 'e' twinning work.
- Skilled and regular teaching of the sounds individual and combinations of letters make helps children to progress well in their reading. They learn to identify and read words containing the sounds.
- Staff promote children's mathematical skills well. Staff eagerly reinforce number work and children's ability to solve simple number problems.
- Children have good opportunities to explore their learning about the world around them. They learn much from special visitors such as a paramedic, nurse, optician and the Huyton Fire Service.
- The quality of leadership and management in the early years is good. The leader knows precisely what to do next to make further improvements. Staff are fully supportive of the vision for continuous improvement.
- Children are kept safe through robust risk assessments. Regular checks by staff keep safeguarding policies and practice under rigorous review and ensure that safeguarding effectively meets 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	104439
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	461894

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	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Bowmaker
Headteacher	Penny France
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2010
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