

Mab Lane Primary School

Mab Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 6QL

Inspection dates	9–10 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school is highly regarded in the community. All staff work exceptionally well with parents and carers to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.
- In the temporary absence of the permanent headteacher, the acting headteacher and senior leaders are continuing her effective work to tackle the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. As a result, outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching are now good.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are trained well, challenge senior leaders and closely monitor pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils, know them well and plan activities that enliven their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is continually improving and their behaviour is good. They are well mannered, respectful, conscientious, and work and play together harmoniously.
- Pupils benefit from an engaging curriculum, with many opportunities to visit places of interest. They enjoy learning French and participating in music and sporting activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their appreciation of British values are promoted exceptionally well.
- Pupils' attainment has improved year on year for the last five years at the end of key stage 2.
- The vast majority of pupils who left the school in 2015 made at least expected progress by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' are currently making rapid progress through key stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Relationships with parents are exceptionally positive. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that their children are safe, well looked after and making good progress.
- Early years provision, including teaching, children's progress and their behaviour, is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers sometimes do not move pupils on quickly enough to more challenging work.
- In mathematics, not all teaching deepens pupils' understanding and mastery of the subject.
- Staff do not always plan learning and playing activities for children in the early years in a way that clearly develops their reading, writing and communication skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that all teachers:
 - check pupils' learning carefully and move all pupils, particularly the most able, on in their learning as soon as they are ready for more challenging work
 - consistently deepen pupils' understanding and mastery of mathematics.

- Improve the quality of the school's early years provision by ensuring that learning and playing activities are always closely linked to developing children's reading, writing and communication skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This is a cohesive and well-organised school in which the acting headteacher and other senior leaders leave nothing to chance. The school is highly regarded in the community and has been recognised for its excellent partnership with various local schools and churches.
- In the temporary absence of the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body are continually building on her effective work, taking the school from strength to strength. In so doing, they have ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders are trained well and have clearly defined roles. Leaders canvass pupils' views about their learning and assess the quality of their work. In mathematics, leaders offer 'enterprise' sessions to parents, while in English they celebrate World Book Day and encourage pupils to write to well-known authors. In geography, leaders coordinate field trips to the local community woodlands; in science, leaders work with pupils and parents to initiate exciting experiments. All of these activities help subject leaders to raise standards in their subjects and improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers work exceptionally well together and are very positive about their school. All staff who spoke to inspectors and completed the inspection questionnaire were highly appreciative of the opportunities they had for training and development. Newly qualified teachers indicate that mentoring and coaching support have helped to improve their teaching practice. Teachers are set challenging performance management targets and are eager to share their good practice with colleagues in school and in various local school cluster groups.
- Pupils benefit from an exciting and well-planned curriculum which promotes their reading, writing and mathematical skills well across all subjects in Years 1 to 6. Teachers ensure that pupils' time in school is memorable, providing many exciting experiences. Pupils enjoy exploring local history, learning about Mayan civilizations, the Ancient Greeks and Roman Britain. They often visit theatres and museums and participate in various arts-based activities such as dancing and singing. Pupils in key stage 2 look forward to their annual residential visit to Wales and pupils enjoy learning French from the Reception Year onward.
- Senior leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. Pupils learn about the major world faiths including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. Pupils are very respectful to adults, caring towards each other and welcoming to visitors. They are enterprising and enjoy raising money for various sports and medical research charities.
- Pupils understand British values well. They know that with their rights come responsibilities and can empathise with those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils put democratic principles into practice and regularly apply in writing for various positions of responsibility, including on the school parliament. Pupils observe Remembrance Day, and enjoy celebrating important events. This they demonstrated during the inspection as they participated in a 'street party' organised by the parent teacher association to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium funding is well spent to improve pupils' engagement in a wide range of sporting activities. Many more pupils are now taking part in gymnastics, orienteering, netball, basketball, football, multi-skills, hockey and cricket. This funding also helps to improve the skills of staff in teaching various sporting and physical education activities, signpost talented pupils to local clubs and increase pupils' participation in competitive sports.
- The school has outstanding relationships with parents and the highly active parent teacher association raises money for various charities and events. Parents regularly participate in science and mathematics events, come to see their children's performances and engage in events such as Friday family breakfast club, where they and older brothers and sisters have breakfast together.
- Currently, the school has a 'light-touch' relationship with the local authority's school improvement service. The local authority has reviewed the quality of teaching and learning and has been quick to respond to school changes. For example, the local authority recently stepped in to make arrangements for a local leader of education to support the acting headteacher.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has taken decisive action in response to the areas of improvement identified from the previous inspection report. It has helped to ensure that staffing changes have been minimal and that the role of middle leaders has been developed.

- Governors are trained well, highly experienced and have many relevant skills. All are valued for their knowledge of the community, education, finance and religion.
- The governing body knows precisely how well the school is performing because it receives regular information on pupils' progress from senior leaders. Governors ask the right questions and often talk with pupils and staff. They challenge and support the school in equal measure and set clear targets for the headteacher.
- Governors know that the quality of teaching is good and improving. The governing body only awards pay increases to teachers if they have reached their performance management targets.
- Governors are fully aware that additional funding, including the pupil premium, is making a difference to the achievement and lives of the pupils that are supported. They know that disadvantaged pupils do as well as their peers in school and are aiming for their attainment to match that of other pupils nationally.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school gives the utmost priority to ensuring that pupils are safe. It has excellent partnership arrangements with a wide range of health, social and legal services. Staff know precisely what to do if they have any concerns relating to a pupil's safety or welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection. Comprehensive assessment systems are in place for all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. These clearly show what pupils can do and enable teachers and senior leaders to chart pupils' progress through the school.
- Pupils learn in bright, well-planned and stimulating classrooms that celebrate their work. All pupils know that to be successful in their learning they should think hard, use classroom resources well and find things out with a partner, as well as seek support and clarification from their teachers. This whole-school approach is effective in developing pupils' resilience and confidence in learning.
- All teachers consistently follow the school's marking and feedback policy. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and teachers routinely provide written feedback, informing pupils of how well they are doing in their learning. Pupils read and act on teachers' suggestions, improving their work as a result.
- Teachers take a consistent approach to correcting pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling across all subjects. They encourage pupils to be creative in their work and to write in different styles to produce diaries, biographical work, letters and creative writing. Pupils also show their good writing in their homework topics, where they often go the 'extra mile' to pursue their writing interests in their own time.
- Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' fluency and comprehension in reading. Effective phonics teaching provides pupils with strategies to read and sound-out unfamiliar words. Pupils, particularly those who found reading difficult, read to inspectors and skilfully 'chopped up' and blended new words and read them accurately.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to ensure that pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs or disability, make good progress and enjoy their learning. This was evident in a fast-moving mathematics class in key stage 1 where pupils were learning to subtract two-digit numbers using the column method. Similarly, pupils in an upper key stage 2 class were asked to complete a range of challenging activities, varying in difficulty, to create 'magic squares' and solve algebraic number problems. However, mathematics activities are not always as challenging as this and do not always deepen pupils' understanding or mastery of the subject.
- Pupils work exceptionally well together to find out new things. This was exemplified when pupils in an upper key stage 2 lesson were learning about King Arthur. The teacher was able to capture pupils' interest with her good subject knowledge, while the teaching assistant worked closely with a small group of less-able pupils, asking open-ended questions and generating a lively discussion. At the end of the lesson, pupils could recall a range of facts about the life of King Arthur and showed their good understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources of information.
- Teaching is not always as effective as this, however. Teachers are not all skilled enough in judging what pupils have learned and moving them on quickly enough when they are ready for more challenging work. On such occasions, the progress made by pupils, particularly the most able, is not as good as it should be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are looked after well by caring and skilled staff. This includes children in the 'little rainbows' (two-year-olds) and children and pupils in the 'sunflower' class (nurture room).
- Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and are confident that they can talk to any adult about any concerns they may have.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. They have regular opportunities to prepare, taste and cook healthy foods. They participate in exercise and after-school clubs in large numbers. The school's 'food worker' promotes healthy eating and lifestyles for pupils and parents.
- Highly effective support is available for pupils through the nurture room, should they need it. Here they can talk to adults, communicate through signing and song and use a voice-changing megaphone to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings.
- Pupils have many opportunities to demonstrate their maturity and hone their leadership skills. This includes through their activities on the school council and in their roles as buddies, monitors and play leaders. Pupils experience democracy through electing their peers to positions on the school parliament and develop their entrepreneurial skills through their management of the school shop.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at all times and have a good understanding of how they can stay safe while using the internet. Older pupils offer sound advice to their younger schoolmates on how to stay safe while online. They know that they should always talk to an adult if they are not sure of the safety of a website, and never share personal information with anyone through the internet.
- Visitors to the school from the police, fire, health and social services help to develop pupils' awareness of safety and the dangers and risks of unsafe situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are highly appreciative of their generous outside playing areas and fields. They look after the school well, ensuring that it is always tidy and free of litter. Pupils take pride in themselves and in the presentation of their work. They often produce outstanding work in their own time, such as highly intricate and skilfully produced models of HMS Titanic.
- Pupils enjoy playing hockey and football, using various apparatus and selecting ropes, hoops and rings from the equipment store. They play considerately, move around the school safely and sensibly and demonstrate good teamwork skills.
- Pupils are of the view that behaviour is almost always good. They say that sometimes people fall out, but soon become friends again, and that minor disputes are quickly 'sorted out'. The overwhelming majority of parents are of the view that behaviour is good, as are all teachers and governors. Inspection evidence, including a full examination of the school's behaviour records, shows that behaviour is typically good over time.
- The school's well-attended breakfast club supports pupils' rapidly improving attendance and good punctuality. Pupils regularly attend school because they enjoy learning and like to discover new things, and because they like playing with their friends.
- Pupils enjoy singing, dancing and putting on special performances for parents. This they demonstrated during the inspection as each class performed a dance routine for parents as part of the school's celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday.
- Pupils have a thorough understanding of the school's rewards and disciplinary procedure. They aspire to collect as many 'catch me cards' (for good behaviour) as they can, aspire to be 'star of the week' and do their very best to be recognised for their good behaviour during weekly celebration assemblies.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have a good understanding of racism, which they say is 'when someone is offensive to you because of your skin colour or where you're from'. They say that racism never happens in school and that if it did there would be 'serious consequences'. Pupils do not have such a clear understanding of homophobic bullying. They say that the word 'gay' is sometimes used in a derogatory way, but that teachers always challenge its use.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The small size of each year group and differences in their make-up mean that it is difficult to compare performance data from year to year. In 2015, the majority of the small cohort of pupils at the end of key stage 1 in 2015 had special educational needs or disability. Most were supported through the pupil premium. The position was similar at the end of key stage 2. In addition, the school experiences unusually high numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school during their primary education. However, the vast majority of pupils made good or better progress last year from their starting points, which are usually lower than those typical for their age on entry to the Nursery class.
- By the time pupils left school at the end of Year 6 in 2015, their attainment was the best that it had been for at least the last five years, moving ever closer to the national average. The overwhelming majority of pupils made at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information shows that almost all pupils made at least the expected progress in all year groups in 2015. Currently pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils, are making good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Pupils' performance in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has improved greatly since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the national phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2015 was close to average. Almost all were secure in their phonics skills and knowledge at the check in Year 2. Pupils read with confidence, good diction and expression and are familiar with books from a wide range of authors.
- Pupils have good writing skills. The overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress in writing in all classes, as shown by work in their English, science and topic books. Rapid improvements have been made in this subject, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils have many opportunities to practise writing at length. They regularly write in different styles, engage in independent research and recount their many trips and visits.
- The school has a large number of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. School assessment information, discussions with pupils and work in books show that such pupils make good or outstanding progress through the school. This is due to the effective support they receive and the excellent partnerships that the school has with specialist partners and parents.
- Senior leaders ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively, and all disadvantaged pupils made at least the expected progress at the end of Year 6 in 2015. Many made more than the expected progress, in all subjects. This rate of progress is replicated throughout the school. Good teaching and well-targeted support helps to ensure that there are no significant differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and any other group of pupils in school. In some year groups, they perform better than their peers.
- The proportion of higher-attaining pupils is increasing, particularly in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling, and their progress is good. However, senior leaders are well aware of the need to boost the attainment of all pupils further, particularly some of the most able. Initiatives such as managing the school shop, mathematics and science days and harder work in class are helping to improve the attainment of this group.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good. This is due to the specialist guidance that teachers receive from the school's mathematics coordinator and the many opportunities teachers provide for pupils to apply their calculation and reasoning skills practically. Pupils' books show many examples of them developing their good 'housekeeping' skills. They regularly tally spending on transport, heating, clothing and leisure activities, work out weekly shopping costs and engage in value-for-money problem-solving tasks.

Early years provision

is good

- Early years provision, including teaching, children's progress and work with parents, is good. Children learn in attractive and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. Children are safe, well looked after and form strong bonds with their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Senior leaders' decision to offer provision for two-year-olds, now in its second year, is already starting to have an impact on standards in subsequent years. Staff are patient and attentive, allowing two-year-old children to develop their ideas and ask simple questions. Staff focus closely on nurturing children's growth in relation to clearly identifiable areas of learning.

- The same highly effective safeguarding arrangements that are in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are fully implemented and effective in the early years.
- The school has accurate and reliable assessment information, which indicates that almost all children enter the Nursery class with weak skills in all areas of learning. Their language and communication skills are especially weak. However, skilled staff nurture children well. This helps to ensure their good progress through both the Nursery and Reception classes. At the end of children's Reception Year in 2015, the majority attained a good level of development, bringing them into line with other children nationally and ensuring that they were well equipped with the skills and abilities necessary for their learning in Year 1.
- Children enjoy sharing; they listen to each other and adults carefully and like to talk about their learning. Children's work is exhibited and given pride of place in displays around the school and they are praised for their hard work. During the inspection, children in the Reception class were especially excited about their forthcoming celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday party. They examined coins featuring the Queen's head and talked about the school's street party, dancing and the food that would be available.
- The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good in all areas of learning, including mathematics, personal development and understanding of the world. Good phonics teaching provides children with effective strategies that help them to sound out and learn new words.
- Children's behaviour is good. They play sensibly, safely and cooperatively at all times. Girls and boys enjoy using the 'cement mixer', pushing wheelbarrows and managing construction projects, while others like balancing and developing their coordination skills. This was demonstrated as they walked carefully across platforms, wooden bridges, planks and blocks.
- Children enjoy role play, including taking orders for flowers and plants in the well-stocked florist shop and dressing up as fairytale characters.
- Parents are happy with the many opportunities they have to 'stay and play' with their children. They say that their children are safe and well looked after in the provision for two-year-olds and in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Parents contribute to children's learning, charting their learning and development at home. Information on children's development in the early years provision, based on staff observations, is regularly communicated to parents.
- Staff use assessment information well to plan activities for children of different abilities and to identify any gaps in their learning. They ensure that all groups of children, including those supported through the pupil premium, make good progress. However, because the learning and playing activities that staff plan are not always closely linked to developing children's reading, writing and communication skills, children's progress in these areas is not always as strong as it should be.

School details

Unique reference number	131480
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10002228

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glyn Thomson
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Lorraine Walwyn
Telephone number	0151 259 4282
Website	www.mablaneprimary.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@mablane.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 October 2013

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above average. This is reflected in the make-up of each year group.
- The large majority of pupils are disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend the Reception class on a full-time basis and the Nursery class on a part-time basis. The school offers provision for up to 16 two-year-olds.
- The school offers a nurture provision for a small number of children from the Reception class and pupils from Year 1.
- The school meets current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's website meets requirements for the publication of information.
- The school runs before- and after-school services, and these formed part of the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, nine staff have been appointed, including three newly qualified teachers. The governing body has been reorganised and includes two new members.
- At the time of the inspection, temporary leadership and management arrangements were in place to cover the absence (due to ill health) of the headteacher and a member of staff on maternity leave.
- The school experiences unusually large numbers of pupils either joining or leaving the school at times other than at the start of the school year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Joint observations were carried out with the acting headteacher. Inspectors observed pupils in the school's nurture provision as well as its provision for two-year-olds.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and five text responses from parents. Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 14 members of staff and 11 pupils were also considered.
- Two meetings were held with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors held discussions with a range of subject leaders, including those responsible for English, mathematics, science computing and geography. Discussions were also held with leaders responsible for the early years provision and provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Informal discussions were held with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. A separate meeting was held with nine members of the parent teacher association, which included two parent governors.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and a local leader of education.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's reviews of its own performance, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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