

Wrightington Mossy Lea Primary School

Mossy Lea Road, Wrightington, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 9RN

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not been able to arrest a decline in the school's overall effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress and too few pupils make accelerated progress during their time in school. As a result, too many pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching across the school. Consequently, pupils' progress varies from year to year and in some year groups is not quick enough.
- Teachers do not consistently plan work that meets the varying learning needs of pupils of differing ages and abilities in their class. As a result, work is sometimes too hard for some pupils or too easy for others.
- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. Pupils are too often given work in mathematics that is overly repetitive and fails to develop their skills and understanding.
- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills by writing at length in different subjects.
- Provision in the early years is not effective in ensuring that children have good access to all aspects of the early years curriculum. As a result, children do not progress as well as they could and, typically, too few achieve the good level of development.
- Until recently, the school's self-evaluation has not been sufficiently well focused on identifying specific strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have a realistic view of the school's position and are determined to secure the improvements required. There are positive signs that improvements made, such as in the consistency of marking and the teaching of phonics, are having a positive impact.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they say that they are happy and feel safe in school.
- The school provides effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and so accelerate the rate of pupils' progress across the school, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information more effectively to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and is not too easy for some or too hard for others
 - in mathematics, teachers provide pupils with enough opportunities to practise and develop problem-solving and reasoning skills, and that they do not ask pupils to complete lengthy, repetitive exercises that do not advance their skills or understanding
 - teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length and in different subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of provision in the early years, by ensuring that Reception-age children working in the mixed-age class have more consistent access to all areas of the early years curriculum, to better develop the full range of skills and knowledge.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders eliminate current inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress in all year groups
 - ensuring that leaders' assessment of the school's performance is more sharply focused and clearly identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have been unable to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes across early years and key stages 1 and 2, have remained at the good level seen in the previous inspection. The overall effectiveness of the school has therefore declined.
- Areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have not been fully addressed. For example, the previous inspection report identified as a key area for improvement the need to, 'Ensure tasks in all lessons consistently match pupils' abilities and enable them to achieve their full potential.' There are currently similar issues because work does not consistently match pupils' learning needs across the mixed-age classes in the school, with the consequent impact on pupils' rates of progress.
- The headteacher and governors have an honest and realistic view of the school's current performance. However, until recently the school's self-evaluation has lacked the precision required to pinpoint those areas most in need of improvement and so form a secure baseline from which to plan a clear way ahead. Recent improvements in this area, well supported by the local authority, are only just beginning to take effect.
- Leaders have correctly identified as a priority the need to ensure that teaching across the school is consistently effective. They have established good links with a local school of similar size, and are beginning to share good practice between the two. Improvements that leaders have already introduced, such the development of a comprehensive and uniform marking policy, can be seen to be having a positive impact.
- Leadership of provision for potentially vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, is effective. Leaders use funding judiciously to make good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities: they are well supported. Comprehensive plans are in place to ensure that the pupil premium funding continues to be used well.
- The school provides pupils with an interesting curriculum that is enhanced by trips to local places of interest, such as a visit to Turton Tower as part of studying the Victorians. The curriculum provides good coverage of a broad and balanced range of subjects, with good provision for science that includes a wide range of practical activities. However, teachers do not consistently make the most of the opportunities for writing that the curriculum provides.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is effectively used to ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of sporting activities, both in school and through extra-curricular clubs. Pupils have had the chance to take part in a varied range of sporting activities, including gymnastics and tennis, and many have enjoyed representing their school in football and netball matches against other local schools.
- The school makes effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils speak confidently about what they have learned about other faiths and about the need to care for others and for the environment. British values are effectively developed through a combination of focused days and the school's broader

work to promote positive values and attitudes.

- The majority of parents are supportive of the school, and a number commented on its 'lovely community feel'. However, a number of parents expressed disappointment about decisions that had been made, such as to remove outdoor play equipment from the key stage 1 and 2 playground. It is clear, though, that school leaders did not take such decisions lightly, and did so having sought appropriate advice.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school. Its staff have helped to establish a supportive partnership with another local school as part of a strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and have also provided support for improvements to the effectiveness of governance.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been unable to halt a decline in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection. School leaders have not consistently been held to account for the school's performance and, as a result, there has been an increase in inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have recognised this issue and recent developments are already having a positive impact on the effectiveness of governance. A change to the structure of the governing body's committees has led to a greater focus on key school performance measures, and school leaders are being challenged more robustly about any apparent dips or concerns. However, while governors now have a more accurate view of the school's current overall effectiveness, their understanding of some of the details surrounding this judgement is less secure.
- Governors show clear commitment to the school, and have not shied away from making difficult decisions linked to staffing and finance. They ensure that additional funding is spent appropriately, and that decisions about pay progression are appropriately linked to performance targets.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders, including governors, have created a culture in the school where pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that their knowledge of good safeguarding practice is up to date, and staff have a clear understanding of what to do if they have any concerns about a child's well-being.
- The school has established good partnerships with external agencies, and as a result, all safeguarding issues are followed through diligently.
- School leaders are rigorous in ensuring that appropriate checks are made on staff, governors and volunteers, to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children. Record-keeping is detailed and accurate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils make the strides in their learning of which they are capable. They do not use the information that they have about pupils' learning well enough and, as a result, plan work that does not consistently match pupils' learning needs. Some work is too easy for some pupils, while for others it is too difficult. Where this is the case, pupils' progress slows.
- In mathematics, calculation skills are taught effectively, and pupils are typically confident working on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tasks at a level that is appropriate for their age. However, teachers do not consistently challenge pupils to then use these mathematical skills to tackle practical problems, and sometimes ask pupils to complete repetitive exercises that do not develop either their mathematical skills or understanding.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing skills effectively, showing good subject knowledge and an appreciation of expectations for writing across the different year groups. However, pupils are not then given sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their writing at length in any areas of the curriculum. This slows their progress in writing.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of phonics since the last inspection, and these have led to improvements in recent outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check. In key stage 1, pupils confidently use phonics to help them to tackle unfamiliar words. In key stage 2, pupils' increased confidence in using phonics, and a more rigorous approach to the teaching and marking of spellings, is leading to improvements in pupils' accuracy in spelling regular and irregular words.
- Reading is well promoted in the school. Leaders, supported by fundraising by parents, have developed an attractive new library area by the school entrance. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly, and adults provide focused support for those pupils who find reading more challenging. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, most pupils have become keen and capable readers. They enjoy reading a range of books and can talk about and explain choices they make about their favourite books and authors.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that they are well supported, so that they are able to meet their own specific learning targets.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and that they have learned important messages about how to keep themselves safe. One pupil was able to explain the importance of not giving out personal information when using the internet, while another spoke about a visit from the police that taught pupils about road safety.
- Pupils are aware that there are different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and racist bullying. They know that it is wrong to treat people unfairly, and say that one of the key British values that they have learned is to 'treat everyone equally'. Pupils say

that bullying in their school is very rare, and that teachers swiftly deal with any occasional incidents, such as name-calling.

- Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility in the school and take their roles very seriously. 'Mini-caretakers' help to keep the school environment tidy and litter-free, while members of the school council and eco-council look at ways to improve their school and look after the environment.
- Pupils show caring attitudes towards others, both in school and further afield. They are proud of the work that they have done raising money for different local and national charities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well mannered and engaging. They are clearly proud of their school, and are keen to tell visitors about life at Mossy Lea.
- Pupils' conduct around school is good and they play well together at breaktimes, making the most of the confined playground space currently available to them. Leaders have ensured that those pupils who need additional support to help them to manage their own behaviour are well supported.
- Attendance rates fluctuate, partly because of the relatively small number of pupils in the school. While in 2016 rates of attendance were below the national average, current figures show an improvement, both in overall attendance and in the number of pupils regularly absent from school.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They listen well, are keen to answer questions and settle quickly to get on with their work. Pupils take pride in their work and make sure that it is neatly presented. However, when they find the learning less engaging, pupils occasionally drift off-task, which causes the pace of learning to slow.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Information about pupils' attainment and progress is significantly influenced by the small numbers of pupils being assessed at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 each year. For example, in 2016, data for Year 6 was based on a cohort of four pupils, while six pupils were included in the data for Year 2. These small numbers, and pupils' varied starting points, make year-on-year comparisons difficult. However, trends over time, and work seen in pupils' books, indicate that pupils typically make the expected amount of progress during their time in key stages 1 and 2, but that too few pupils make accelerated progress.
- In 2016, standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 6 were higher in writing than in reading and mathematics, and pupils' progress was also stronger in writing than in the other areas. The picture was reversed in key stage 1, where attainment and progress in reading and mathematics were broadly in line with national averages and a little lower in writing.
- As a result of few pupils making better than the expected amount of progress across key stages 1 and 2, not enough pupils, including those who are most-able, go on to

reach the higher levels. The school's own tracking, and pupils' work, show that the majority of pupils currently in the school are working at the expected standard for their age, but few are exceeding that level.

- There are considerable variations in annual figures showing the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, because the number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is so small. In some year groups, there are no pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding. Over time and across all year groups, most disadvantaged pupils make progress from their starting points that is at least similar to others in the school and broadly in line with others nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their varied starting points. Effective additional support helps these pupils to move forward with their learning and to regularly achieve their individual targets.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Starting points for children entering Reception class vary from year to year, because of the small number of children in each cohort. Typically, the majority of children start in Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, although many have less prior experience in reading, writing and number than in other areas of learning.
- Children typically make steady progress during their time in Reception class, but few make accelerated progress. The proportion of children achieving the good level of development by the time they leave the early years varies from year to year, but has recently been below the national average.
- Children in the early years are in a mixed-age class with pupils from Years 1 and 2, although they often work as a separate group in a smaller room next to the classroom. The constraints of the learning environment mean that children do not have sufficiently regular access to provision in all areas of learning, either indoors or outside. This limits the progress that they make across the full scope of the early years curriculum.
- Regular observations are made of children's learning, and these are systematically recorded. However, these assessments are not then used well enough to accelerate children's progress in areas identified as being less well developed.
- Leaders have recognised that improvements are required in the early years and have actively sought support from the local authority and another local school. It is too early to judge the impact that this support has had in terms of improving provision in the early years.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Relationships between adults and children are warm and positive, and children learn to play together and share well. Parents appreciate the level of care provided by early years staff, with one commenting on the 'caring, understanding and nurturing environment'.
- Staff ensure that children are well looked after, and staff and leaders make sure that all statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	119225
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10024249

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Gregson
Headteacher	Vanessa Andrews
Telephone number	01257 423 107
Website	www.mossylea.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@mossylea.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2012

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught for most of the day in three mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Children in the early years attend Reception class on a full-time basis.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2016 to report on whether the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for achievement in Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2015, which was some time after the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes, and was joined on a number of these visits to lessons by the headteacher. The inspector also looked at pupils' work in books, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and held discussions with groups of pupils. He also talked informally with pupils around the school and in the playground.
- The inspector considered the eight written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and also talked briefly with some parents before the start of the school day.
- The inspector held a meeting with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also had discussions with a number of staff in school, including the leader responsible for provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector met with two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance, meeting records and reports from the local authority. The inspector also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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