

Medlock Primary School

Wadeson Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester, Greater Manchester M13 9UJ

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although provisional data for 2017 is more positive than in the previous year, especially in mathematics, the progress that pupils make in key stage 2 is not as good as it should be.
- The standards reached by pupils, including those of disadvantaged pupils, at the end of key stage 2 remain below average.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are making stronger progress than in the past. However, there is still a legacy of underachievement for many due to weaker teaching over time.
- The amount of progress that pupils make in key stage 2 in writing has declined, as teachers do not always ensure that their expectations, based on what pupils can already do, are high enough.
- Inconsistently secure subject knowledge in key stage 2 limits the progress that some pupils make.
- The standard of teaching has not always been strong enough to enable pupils to make the progress that they should. While there are signs of improvement in teaching across the school, it is still not good enough in key stage 2.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to make the progress they are capable of, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Some pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their basic skills in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders demonstrate ambition for their pupils to succeed well. They have taken decisive action to improve the standard of teaching.
- Standards have risen in key stage 1 and in the early years, including those reached by disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes in the early years are good. This is because teaching is consistently effective and, as a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- A rich curriculum and wide range of after-school clubs enthuse pupils and encourage their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- Relationships are strong. Pupils are respectful towards each other and adults. Pupils carry out a wide range of roles of responsibility very well.
- The learning environment is bright and vibrant. Cultural diversity is embraced and celebrated.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have secure subject knowledge so that they can support pupils in their learning across different subjects
 - raising teachers' expectations so that they plan activities which stretch and challenge the most able pupils, especially in mathematics
 - continuing to build on the currently developing practice of enabling teachers to monitor, evaluate and improve their own and other teachers' skills.
- Improve pupils' progress, including that of those who are disadvantaged, so that a greater proportion reach the standards that they should by the end of key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop the understanding and skills they need in sentence structure and grammar in their writing
 - continuing to develop pupils' understanding of a range of vocabulary through encouraging them to read widely and often.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The quality of education has declined at Medlock Primary since the previous inspection. It is no longer good. Over time, the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 2, has been too weak to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should. Consequently, too few pupils have been well equipped for their transition into secondary school. Considerable turbulence in staffing, particularly in key stage 2, is the key reason that current pupils continue to live with a legacy of underachievement.
- Despite this decline, leadership remains good. This is because leaders have been relentless in their drive to improve the quality of teaching. However, the constant changes in staff mean that the good-quality and appropriate training provided by leaders has not had the desired impact. Throughout a period of change, leaders have remained resolute, maintaining high expectations and taking decisive action to weed out weak teaching. This has taken time, but leaders are now seeing the fruits of their labour. Staffing is stable, teaching is improving and pupils are making stronger progress than in the past.
- Leaders at Medlock Primary School have a very clear understanding of the community the school serves. They know how to support its pupils to flourish in the best way they can. They have ensured that pupils feel safe in and enjoy coming to school each day. They are developing a real sense of aspiration and empowerment in pupils to help them to make a positive contribution to their school and wider community, reflecting a strong focus on developing fundamental British values.
- Leaders are clear about where weaknesses remain in the progress made by pupils in key stage 2, especially in reading and writing. They have clear and detailed plans to address both these areas. Their work is already making a difference. For example, a recent strategy to increase pupils' desire to read, alongside developing their comprehension skills, has gone a long way towards improving fluency and a love of books.
- Leaders manage staff performance well, ensuring that appraisal systems are sharply focused on raising standards. Leaders demonstrate resilience in 'rooting out' practice that does not enable pupils to make the progress they should.
- They ensure that all who work in the school receive intensive and effective training in order to meet the needs of the pupils in their care. Staff respond well to these opportunities. They reflect on their own practice and take responsibility for improving their own teaching and that of their colleagues.
- Through this positive approach to improving teaching, leaders are developing a learning community which includes pupils and staff. There is a clear love of learning developing, evident across the school.
- The school is a calm and well-ordered environment. Effective use is made of the many positive images and written phrases displayed around the school. This encourages pupils to be ambitious in their aspirations and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Very good links with local initial teacher education providers enable newly qualified teachers to be well supported in their roles as new teachers. The induction and support

they receive set them up well to be successful teachers in the school.

- Leaders are clear that there is still a considerable amount of work to do. They have put suitable support in place to help key stage 2 pupils who are still not working at the standard they should be to catch up quickly. Leaders are able to assess how well these plans are impacting on outcomes for pupils and adapt and refine them to make them more effective as needed.
- Leaders are outward looking. They make good use of external support available to improve the school.
- A good example of this is the work the school is currently doing to improve standards of reading. Following some collaborative work with other schools, new resources have recently been introduced to encourage pupils to read more frequently and more widely. This is already having a positive impact. Pupils have increased the amount of time they spend reading. They are improving their comprehension skills and speak very enthusiastically about how they have quickly moved on to higher-level reading books.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, demonstrate passion and enthusiasm in seeking out interesting and exciting learning activities. These provide a good focus on a broad range of subjects. These activities capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning and help them gain the skills and knowledge they need across a wide range of subjects.
- A good example of this is work seen during the inspection, using the story of 'The billy goats gruff' to develop language and geography skills.
- Leaders celebrate and embrace the rich diversity of the cultures and languages that pupils and their families bring to the school community. They are developing a curriculum that exploits opportunities well to use literacy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Activities that pupils access during the school day and in after-school clubs make a positive contribution to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their well-being. Pupils enjoy their learning and develop a wide range of talents, such as sport, music and academic skills.
- Leaders value sport highly and recognise that pupils enjoy and benefit from being active, especially outdoors, as much as possible. Good use of the sports premium funding has widened the sporting opportunities that pupils have access to and are keen to participate in.
- Effective use of the funding available for disadvantaged pupils ensures that these pupils are achieving increasingly well compared to other pupils nationally, especially those in key stage 1.
- Good use is also made of the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils are well supported to make the best progress they can. They access additional support, including therapeutic teaching, where needed.
- Most parents and carers said that they would recommend the school to others. Those who spoke to inspectors had only positive things to say about the school.
- Evidence collected during the inspection shows that the school has turned a corner. The stronger performance in key stage 1 and the early years demonstrates the capacity of the strong leadership team to address any remaining weaknesses.

Aspirations are high for the future, and there are well-thought-out plans in place to help the school to meet them.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear view of the strengths of and areas for development for the school.
- They demonstrate the same high aspirations for all groups of pupils in the school as senior leaders do.
- They are able to describe how plans discussed in meetings translate into real changes in the school. Furthermore, they can comment, with insight, on the differences that these changes make to pupils.
- Governors ask pertinent questions about teaching and pupils' achievement. They use well the high-quality information they receive from the headteacher to gain an accurate understanding of the school's current effectiveness. They hold the headteacher to account with focused performance management targets, which are closely linked to current school priorities.
- Governors have supported the headteacher while she has had to make difficult decisions about weaknesses in teaching.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties diligently, including ensuring that additional funding is spent appropriately.
- Governors have carried out an audit of their skills and are aware of areas where new governors could contribute. They make good use of their collective skills. One governor takes an active role in monitoring the work that leaders do to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effectively supporting the most vulnerable pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and governors are trained appropriately to carry out their respective roles in keeping children safe.
- Staff are aware of local safeguarding issues. They are vigilant in monitoring pupils in the school for signs of risk from these.
- Frequent updates and checks on staff members' understanding of current safeguarding guidance ensure that staff are confident about knowing how to spot signs of danger and how to report their concerns about a pupil.
- Policies, procedures and records are up to date and fit for purpose, including risk assessments and accident logs.
- Records show that families who need additional support are referred to other agencies, when needed. Referrals are followed up and monitored stringently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching, particularly in key stage 2, has not been good enough to help pupils make the most of their time in Medlock Primary. Weak teaching in the past has resulted in older pupils leaving with gaps in their learning. Teaching since the previous inspection has failed to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education.
- High staff morale and greater stability within the workforce demonstrate that leaders' work to improve teaching is having an impact. Pupils' books and the information that leaders hold on pupils' achievement show an improving picture across the school. Pupils are benefiting from much stronger provision in most classrooms. This is especially true for those children in the early years and those pupils in key stage 1.
- Teaching in key stage 2, although stronger, is still too variable. It is not sufficiently strong to help eradicate gaps in pupils' learning. This means that pupils across the school are not always exposed to the same vibrant and exciting activities that are commonplace in some classrooms.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. At times, teachers do not make good use of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do. Consequently, the challenge on offer to pupils is not consistently at the right level.
- This is most noticeable for the most able pupils. Teachers do not expect enough from this group. This is particularly true in mathematics. These pupils are often not provided with well-matched activities that challenge them sufficiently to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. The support that leaders have put in place to develop teacher confidence in supporting these pupils in mathematics is in the early stages and, as a result, this is not consistently secure in key stage 2.
- The teaching of writing does not consistently ensure that pupils make enough progress, as teachers do not take enough notice of what pupils can already do. Teaching to develop pupils' use of grammar and confidence in sentence structure is not consistently secure. Despite this, pupils value and respond well to the useful feedback they receive from teachers about their writing and have a clear understanding of the improvements needed. Older pupils use this information well to assess their own progress.
- The teaching of reading is becoming increasingly effective. Leaders have identified that pupils do not have a strong enough understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and do not read widely or often enough. Although the impact of this is not evident in recently published results, other evidence gathered during the inspection shows that recently adapted reading methods and new resources are already having a positive impact on reading standards.
- The development of the teaching of mathematics has been a major focus for the school. The work that has been done to ensure that pupils are working at the expected standard for their age is clear in published results and in the work in pupils' books.
- Teaching in key stage 1 consistently demonstrates skilful and confident delivery of a range of subjects, particularly writing. However, in key stage 2, the effectiveness of some teaching is limited by teachers' insecure subject knowledge about how quickly to move pupils on.
- Pupils' learning across subjects beyond English and mathematics is much stronger. Teachers carefully plan activities that develop a wide range of skills, link subjects together well and enthuse pupils.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and other pupils who are struggling in English and mathematics are, overall, well supported by confident and capable teaching assistants. They know how to adapt activities to ensure that the needs of most of these pupils are met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is a strength of the school. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs on offer are well attended, and pupils described these as one of the many things they enjoy at school.
- Staff have pupils' emotional well-being as a high priority. This is appreciated by pupils and parents. Pupils are well supported. They make use of a 'worry box' to share their concerns with a trained counsellor, who also works with identified pupils who need additional emotional support.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They love to work. They display respect, resilience and good levels of self-motivation when asked to engage in paired work or discussion. Even the youngest pupils show that they can work with focus and good engagement in tasks that challenge them.
- Pupils demonstrate clear aspiration to be chosen to take up roles of responsibility in the school, such as members of the eco-council, peer mediators, play leaders or members of the highly esteemed Rights and Responsibilities of the School (RRS) group. They carry out their duties with pride and enthusiasm, contributing well to the smooth running of the school.
- Relationships are strong. This is evident in the way in which pupils relate to each other and adults. Pupils and adults greet each other warmly as they pass in the school. Genuine, nurturing behaviour is shown by older pupils to younger ones as they play and chat together around school and in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils have access to healthy and nutritious food at lunchtime and in the breakfast and after-school clubs. They are able to self-serve sensibly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how they are kept safe in school and of their own role in this, including when they are online.
- All of the parents and pupils spoken to by inspectors agreed that pupils are kept safe at school. Pupils and most of their parents agreed that, although rare, any incidents of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils display good manners and orderly conduct in lessons, in the dining room, at play and as they move around the school.
- Staff and peer mediators, who are trained to support their peers, make effective and consistent use of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour. Pupils who need additional support to manage their behaviour have access to this where needed.

- Pupils enjoy being at school and their good attendance reflects this. All groups of pupils attend well. Any pupils who have falling rates of attendance are quickly identified by leaders, and their families are supported to ensure that they attend school regularly.
- Pupils and their parents said that everyone is welcome at Medlock Primary School.
- School logs show that incidents of behaviour, including reported incidents of bullying behaviour, are recorded, dealt with and monitored appropriately.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, children's achievement by the end of Reception and pupils' progress across key stage 1 have strengthened. In contrast, pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6 has declined. Pupils' progress was especially low in 2016 in reading and mathematics. These pupils were unable to build on their average starting points. Consequently, the standards they reached in reading, writing and mathematics were low.
- The 2017 results showed a marked improvement against the outcomes in the previous year, especially in mathematics. Nonetheless, progress in reading and writing was still too slow, and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in these subjects continued to lag behind the national average. This is a direct result of historical weaker teaching.
- The work in pupils' books and the assessment information collected by the school show an improving picture of pupils' progress. Pupils currently at the school, across different classes, are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Nonetheless, this is still not rapid enough for some older pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6, to make up for their considerable underachievement in the past.
- The improvement in standards is clearer in key stage 1. The most recent results and other evidence gathered during the inspection demonstrate that pupils are now achieving standards that are at least as good as those of other pupils across the country in all areas, including in subjects other than English and mathematics. These pupils are making swift progress. The proportion of pupils who achieve greater depth also increased in 2017 in key stage 1, as shown by provisional data, although this remains below the national average.
- In the Year 1 phonics check, pupils attained better than other pupils nationally. This supports other evidence gathered from the inspection, as pupils who read and spoke to inspectors, from both key stage 1 and key stage 2, demonstrated confident use of phonic strategies. They also talked enthusiastically about positive reading habits and the recent progress they are making in reading, following the recently refined focus on developing reading across the school.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 1 and in phonics in Year 1 reflects the same improving picture, as these pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally. In key stage 2, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils reflects that of others in the school. Current school data shows that this is improving, but published data for the end of key stage 2 remained below that of other pupils nationally.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- Due to weaknesses in teaching, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in key stage 2 in writing, as they are not confident about sentence structure or grammar. The additional challenge of increased expectation from the new curriculum and higher age-related expectation has compounded the apparent gap between how well pupils do at the school and how well other pupils perform nationally.
- This decline in progress in writing has also been a direct result of lack of teacher subject knowledge about how to move pupils on. This is particularly true for the most able pupils. In some cases, but not all, writing in pupils' workbooks in subjects other than English does not maintain the same standard as that seen in their English work.
- Current school data shows that, because progress has been slow in key stage 2, pupils in the current Year 5 and particularly the Year 6 groups are behind where they should be.
- Some pupils, including many who speak English as an additional language, struggle to reach the higher expectations of the new national curriculum in reading. In particular, they find it difficult to interpret the wide range of vocabulary and intention of the author, as defined by the new age-related expectations.
- The impact of improvements in teaching is now beginning to be seen. In provisional data from 2017, the progress of key stage 2 pupils made from their starting points improved in mathematics when compared to 2016.
- For the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, mathematics remains a shortcoming. Leaders are particularly aware that in mathematics these pupils do not make as much progress as they should. This is a result of a lack of teacher confidence in supporting pupils to make greater progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The vibrant and well-ordered indoor and outdoor learning environments in the early years ensure that all children have access to a wide range of well-planned and enticing activities.
- The effective use of staff and resources, in the indoor and outdoor areas, ensures that children quickly develop early mathematical and writing skills, alongside all other areas of learning. As a result, children are well prepared for their move into key stage 1. They leave the early years with a good range of skills and positive attitudes to learning.
- Children accessing the high-quality provision for two-year olds are well supported by adults who have a good understanding of their needs. They make good progress as a result of this and are well prepared for Nursery and Reception.
- The early years leader has a clear view of standards across the early years provision. She ensures that the detailed plans for improvement are delivered and evaluated. These plans are based on accurate and thorough analysis of the needs of the children. For example, she is able to demonstrate that recent work to improve the outdoor environment has had a positive impact on the outcomes that children achieve, especially in their physical development, understanding of the world and

communication and language.

- Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's learning. Leaders offer parents training in how to support their children's learning at home, especially in language development. Many parents take up this offer and subsequently help out at school, developing their confidence in supporting their children in their learning.
- Children collaborate well and demonstrate focus and resilience in a good range of open-ended problem-solving activities. They show the same focus and engagement whether they are working individually on focused tasks with adults or with other children.
- Behaviour is good. Staff ensure that children work or play with purpose, making good use of time throughout the day. This was exemplified well as children were observed developing social and reading skills, sharing a book with an adult while enjoying snack time together.
- All welfare requirements are met. Children are kept safe by rigorous risk assessments and diligence in following safeguarding procedures. Hygiene practices are good. Children are able to access the toilets and wash their hands independently.
- When children enter Nursery, most of them have skills and knowledge which are lower than those typical for their age. They make good progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is increasing over time, although it remains below average.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used well, as the difference between their progress and that of other children has diminished. The difference between how well boys and girls do has also diminished.
- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported to achieve well. Additional funding is used effectively for these children to provide appropriate additional support to enable them to progress well. Children who have recently arrived from other countries also make good progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	105483
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10037752

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsay Gilbert
Headteacher	Joanne Herbert
Telephone number	01612 731830
Website	www.medlock.manchester.sch.uk
Email address	jl.herbert@medlock.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There has been a high turnover of staff historically due to short-term work visas. A number of staff have also left the school, particularly those in key stage 2. At times, agency staff have been needed to cover the vacancies in the short term.
- The local authority provided some additional support to the school following the 2016 results.
- The school met the government floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum standards for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is high compared to that of other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the

national average.

- Pupil mobility is high, as there are many families who arrive from and leave to live in other countries throughout the academic year.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans.
- The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs to support families. These are run by the governing body and were part of the inspection. It also runs a holiday club.
- A provision for two-year olds operates alongside the early years area and is part of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), leaders of the curriculum, early years and behaviour and attendance. The lead inspector also held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and held discussions with groups of pupils. They also talked informally with pupils around the school, in the dining room and in the playground.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, by reviewing 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also held discussions with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors considered 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including the school website, information about pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' review of current school performance, records of meetings and reports from governors. Inspectors also examined safeguarding documentation and records of attendance.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Dimeck	Ofsted Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Ofsted Inspector

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