

# Knowsley Lane Primary School

Astley Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 8DB

## Inspection dates

17–18 January 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The absolute commitment, clear vision and relentless efforts of the senior leaders, local advisory body and academy trustees have made Knowsley Lane Primary a flourishing and highly successful school.
- Staff have high expectations and plan activities that enable pupils to make rapid progress. Lessons are interesting and set at the right level for all pupils. Creative and consistently high-quality teaching makes learning enjoyable and inspires pupils to do their best.
- Staff morale is high, even though they are constantly challenged to improve the quality of teaching. Staff receive excellent support and their efforts are always valued and appreciated.
- Throughout the school, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who speak English as an additional language and the most able pupils, make rapid progress.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Disadvantaged pupils have caught up so that they achieve as well as other pupils nationally.
- Children in early years make exceptional progress from their different starting points.
- The curriculum is innovative and stimulating, combining essential skills and knowledge with exciting and meaningful experiences. As a result, pupils make sustained progress across a range of subjects.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because of the school's emphasis on personal values and building a harmonious community in which everyone demonstrates thoughtfulness and respect.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils say they feel completely safe in school and are very well looked after. Exemplary practice ensures that pupils are kept safe.
- Highly experienced governors are passionate in their support for the school and in their challenge to school leaders. Effective governance has been integral to rapid school improvement.
- Attendance remains a challenge for the school, although it has improved steadily over the last four years.
- Although supportive of the school, some parents and carers do not take an active part in their children's learning.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to build even closer relationships with parents and carers in order to:
  - emphasise the importance of regular attendance
  - engage them even more successfully in supporting their children's learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The principal provides inspiring and ambitious leadership and is highly knowledgeable about teaching and learning. The vice-principal is equally effective and together they make an excellent team, sustaining a culture of continuous improvement.
- Senior leaders lead by example, modelling what is expected in the classroom. Teaching and learning have improved vastly because leaders have enabled teachers to raise their expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Staff have risen to the challenge and are keen to further their professional development in their own time. Teachers feel valued and respected.
- Subject leaders take responsibility for standards in their subjects through checking pupils' progress, observing colleagues teach, checking planning and looking at the marking of pupils' work. They are thus able to identify weaker elements, which become priorities in the school improvement plan and are addressed rapidly. All middle leaders play an important role in school improvement and are proud to do so.
- There is a whole-school focus on raising the aspirations of staff and pupils. Many displays around the school are focused on pupils' ambitions and successes. For example, a 'hopes and dreams' display includes pupils' aspirations to be doctors, nurses, librarians, footballers, teachers, designers and even a palaeontologist. Another display records the successes of past pupils in the fields of law and medicine.
- A highly effective programme of monitoring underpins the work of senior leaders. The principal continuously checks on the progress being made against the school development plan and expects all staff to do the same.
- The school has a very clear strategy for its use of funding for disadvantaged pupils. Specific governors, as well as senior staff, check that the funds are spent wisely and that they bring about the desired outcome. All disadvantaged pupils, in all classes, are reaching national standards and making excellent progress.
- The school's strategies to support the progress of pupils with SEND are equally successful. Many of these pupils make stronger progress than others because of the support they receive.
- Leaders have used the curriculum as a powerful tool for raising standards. The curriculum is coherent, well planned and challenging. Much time has gone into ensuring that pupils are challenged in their learning and that learning is built upon systematically. The current approach to developing pupils' language acquisition is having a hugely positive impact on raising standards. Assessment is built into curriculum delivery to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are progressing and being developed.
- Teachers use the curriculum to make pupils more globally aware and to ensure that they have an awareness of themselves and others. There are many enrichment opportunities, such as visits and after-school clubs. At present, there are clubs for reading, multi-sports, craft and film.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding received by the school is spent wisely on

resources and coaching. Pupils compete in local competitions, and many take part in sporting activities. The funding has raised the profile of PE and is helping pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. The school offers sporting activities at breakfast club three days each week, supported by the input of a nearby football club. This has been successful in improving pupils' attendance and fitness.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of the curriculum and the life of the school. British values are promoted through a focus on lifelong learning, developing enquiring minds, self-discovery, overcoming obstacles and celebrating diversity. The inclusion of everyone is central. Respect, empathy and equality are at the core of the everyday work of the school.
- Parents who spoke to the inspectors said that they feel welcome in school. Most of those who responded to the questionnaire praised the principal, the staff and the curriculum. A few raised concerns, which were discussed with school leaders. The school is working hard to engage with parents and encourage them to be even more involved with their children's education.
- The local authority worked very effectively alongside the multi-academy trust to provide advice and support after the previous inspection when the school was judged to require improvement. Now Knowsley Lane is able to support other schools because of the progress it has made and the superb quality of education it provides.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is excellent. Since the previous inspection, governors (the local advisory body) have significantly increased their skills. They have implemented training received from the multi-academy trust to further extend their challenge to senior leaders.
- The principal provides detailed reports and information about pupils' progress that enable governors to hold staff fully to account and secure excellent outcomes for pupils. The local advisory body keeps a careful watch on aspects of the school's work such as finance, and health and safety to assure members that all is as it should be. Named governors regularly check to make sure that spending on disadvantaged pupils has the desired impact.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is seen as the responsibility of everyone in school. Checks are in place to make sure that all staff keep up to date with safeguarding training.
- Day-to-day management of safeguarding is overseen by the learning mentor, who works closely with other agencies when required. She supports individual pupils and their families to good effect. Her use of the school's therapy dog, Piper, is an example of a successful strategy that is having a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and engagement with school.
- Leaders take the right actions to keep pupils safe. As a result, pupils feel very safe and rates of attendance have steadily increased.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They provide structure and pace in learning. Consequently, pupils of all abilities make sustained progress across a range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and are self-motivated from an early age. They quickly become used to working individually and keeping on task. This helps pupils to build self-confidence and resilience.
- Reading is taught well right from the moment children start school, so that they acquire this essential skill as soon as possible. Phonics teaching begins in Nursery. Teachers have developed many strategies to improve the standards of pupils' reading, such as purchasing new class reading books, setting up a reading club and, above all, creating a spacious and well-resourced new library. A few parents spoke to inspectors praising the support they get in helping their children learn to read. Because of these strategies, pupils' progress in reading is now as strong as it is in writing and mathematics.
- In writing, pupils make excellent progress because teachers help pupils to acquire a rich, broad vocabulary. All pupils have dictionaries to refer to and build up ambitious word banks to help them to write creatively. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were writing to create a dramatic narrative full of suspense, while Year 5 pupils were writing imaginatively about furniture coming alive. The whole-school approach, consistently applied, is making a strong impact on raising standards in English.
- The same consistency is seen in the way mathematics is taught. All teachers use the same strategies and the same methods of calculation. Pupils develop deeper understanding by the focus on fluency, reasoning and problem solving. Questions such as, 'if we don't know something, how can we find it out?' help pupils to develop further independence in their approach to learning. All teachers put a strong emphasis on pupils understanding why an answer is wrong so that they may avoid pitfalls in the future.
- Pupils look after their exercise books with pride and are given time at the start of lessons to complete any corrections or additional questions that have been set. Teachers put great emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop a good handwriting style and set out their work neatly to lessen the chances of errors.
- In all classes, there is additional challenging work for the most able pupils. Equally, there is strong support for pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants support learning very effectively, either by helping the whole class or by taking small groups or individuals aside for extra or different work.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and they use this extremely well to support pupils' learning. They plan lessons that both follow pupils' interests and broaden their horizons. For example, pupils in key stage 1 are currently focusing on treasure islands and learning about maps, the ocean, navigation and pirates. In key stage 2, the focus is on the earth as an island, bringing in science and environmental topics.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about the improvements they see, such as the new playground, the reading hut, the new library and the school therapy dog. The school is immaculately clean and tidy.
- Pupils thrive in this nurturing, disciplined and caring environment. They are encouraged to become thoughtful citizens, not just in their own community but globally. Members of the school council have set their own specific goals for this academic year. They are to keep the school clean and tidy, to help pupils talk about their feelings and take care of their mental health, to raise money for charity and to continue to improve their literacy. Inspection evidence indicates that they are succeeding in all these goals.
- Pupils are fully aware of and understand the personal learning goals that underpin the curriculum. These include adaptability, resilience, morality, enquiry, cooperation and respect. Pupils regularly recite the school's three top tips for success: believe in yourself, challenge yourself, work harder than you did yesterday.
- Pupils say that learning is interesting and challenging, but that they are always given extra help if they need it.
- Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and learn how to keep themselves safe in different circumstances. They can describe the rules for using the internet and social media safely. They understand about the dangers of being drawn into crime or drug misuse. As a result of an assembly given by the Merseyside fire service before Guy Fawkes Night, a pupil knew what to do to save a younger child from being hurt at a firework display.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that there is little or no bullying and that anything that occurs is quickly dealt with by staff. They say that there is no homophobic or racist bullying. This is confirmed by school records.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- At all times of day, in classrooms, on corridors or in the playground, pupils' behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils are supported by all staff, who give their time freely. The highly nurturing atmosphere and mutual respect evident, even for the most hard-to-reach or vulnerable pupils, ensure that behaviour is changed for the better. The high expectations of all staff and the enjoyment of learning in classrooms result in pupils who really want to learn.
- The school has worked continuously and successfully to increase rates of attendance over the last three years. However, even though it is the highest in the local area, the rate remains just below the national average. The local authority uses this school as an influencer for other local schools with very poor attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Throughout the school, current pupils of all ages make substantial progress across the curriculum. In a range of subjects, all pupils reach challenging targets for their progress and attainment. This is because they have excellent attitudes to learning and skilled teachers.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen for the past three years and in 2018, all pupils reached standards just above the national figure in mathematics, writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar. They were just below the national figure in reading. This is all the more impressive because most pupils begin school with skills significantly below those typical for their age.
- Standards in reading are now as high as in other subjects because of the strategies the school is using to develop pupils' reading skills. The large majority of pupils reach the expected standard in phonics in the Year 1 phonics check. Leaders have made improving pupils' reading a focus for the past two years. They are working with some parents to help them to support their children's progress by ensuring that they read at home as much as possible.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics are high because of the consistency and quality of the teaching they receive. Pupils become confident in their learning because of the emphasis on practising what they have learned, deepening knowledge and problem solving.
- Pupils' skills in writing are developed not only in English lessons but across the wider curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use interesting vocabulary and always to be conscious of the reader.
- The curriculum is helping pupils to become more globally aware. For example, in a science lesson on pollution, pupils listened avidly as they learned about the negative impact humans are having on the planet. They suggested practical ways in which people can help, such as reusing shopping bags and not wasting food.
- The most able pupils achieve very well because teaching is suitably challenging. Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher standard has increased significantly. In the current year, more pupils in all classes are reaching higher levels and demonstrating deeper learning. Middle-ability pupils also make excellent progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils nationally because of the additional support they receive. Leaders ensure that these pupils make faster progress in order to catch up with their peers. The most able disadvantaged pupils often go on to exceed the standards expected for their age.
- Pupils with SEND progress at least as well as other pupils and often better. These pupils achieve well because leaders make sure that they receive appropriate personalised support.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education because of the school's emphasis on personal development, their positive attitudes to learning and the slightly above-average standards they have reached.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The vice-principal leads early years and has a firm focus on improvement. The early years leader successfully models what she wants to see staff do and this has led to sustained improvement as good practice is firmly embedded. Inspectors saw excellent teaching as children enjoyed imaginative activities, such as building an igloo with sugar cubes.
- Adults build on children's interests, but the emphasis is always on learning. Not a moment is wasted. This was seen in the activities used at the start of the day. Children settle very quickly to a range of activities, including dance movements, manipulating modelling clay, gathering cotton-wool balls into different colours and number recognition.
- The environment and well-chosen resources stimulate children's love of learning. Children's behaviour is excellent, and this is because adults model their high expectations of themselves and the children. All relationships are positive. Children are keen to learn because teachers plan activities they enjoy. The extensive outdoor area is particularly popular with all the children. Children's self-confidence develops from the start: children show resilience when they do not get something right first time.
- Assessment is used accurately for planning the next steps in children's learning. Leaders check progress daily and target areas for intervention when necessary. The subject leader for English wastes no time in identifying children who will become the most able readers and ensures that they receive the right encouragement.
- Parents are kept informed regularly about their children's progress through an electronic device. The engagement of parents is rapidly increasing and having a positive impact on improving outcomes for children. Parents are regularly invited into school for activities such as den-building, craft workshops and family learning links.
- Children join Nursery Year or Reception Year with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age. During the year, progress from very low starting points is rapid. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased each year for the past three years, and in 2018 matched the national figure. Any differences between groups of children such as girls and boys, disadvantaged children and those with SEND, diminish rapidly. The most able children are identified and targeted from the start. Transition afternoons help children to be ready and looking forward to joining Year 1.



## School details

Unique reference number	141205
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10057949

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Christine Derbyshire
Principal	Linda Lord
Telephone number	0151 556 9999
Website	<a href="http://www.knowsleylane.knowsley.sch.uk">www.knowsleylane.knowsley.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:linda.lord@vantageacademies.co.uk">linda.lord@vantageacademies.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	28–29 September 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools. It opened in 2014 and is part of the SS Simon and Jude CE Academy Trust, which is also known as the Vantage Academy Trust.
- Children attend Nursery part time and attend Reception full time. At least half of the children in Reception join the school from other or no early years settings.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is high. It is almost three times the national average.
- The local governing body provides a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.

- Since the previous inspection, three governors with a background in education have joined the local governing body.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. One observation was done jointly with the principal.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, a group of Year 6 pupils, three members of the local governing body, the chief operating officer and school improvement lead for the Vantage Academy Trust, and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to parents as they were bringing their children to school and took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors gained the views of staff from the 19 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and from talking to staff during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents. These included the school's information about pupils' progress and attainment, records concerning pupils' attendance, and records relating to safeguarding systems and the checking of teaching and learning. They also reviewed minutes of local governing body meetings.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christine Howard

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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