

Wrightington Mossy Lea Primary School

Mossy Lea Road, Wrightington, Lancashire WN6 9RN

Inspection dates

30 April – 1 May 2019

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked very effectively with the local authority to restore the school's former status as a good school.
- Strong and effective leadership have provided clear direction and driven good improvements to teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- Teachers, leaders and governors are all working together to ensure that every pupil achieves as well as they can, whatever their starting points.
- Good-quality teaching is now firmly established. Teachers give pupils interesting work and challenge them to think hard.
- Teachers ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to succeed.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but progress in reading is not quite as strong. Leaders' strategies to address this are paying off but need more time to embed.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum which captures pupils' interests and allows them to make strong progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and value the wide range of interesting activities and experiences provided.
- Pupils apply themselves well to their work and are proud of what they achieve. Leaders have correctly identified the need to improve pupils' confidence and independent learning skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are kind and caring to each other, listen carefully in lessons and show respect to adults.
- Through the curriculum pupils develop a good understanding of some aspects of diversity but not the full range required by law.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is not promoted well enough through the curriculum.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being and safety are high priorities.
- Pupils are given good information about their rights and how to stay safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents and carers agree.
- The recent formal collaboration with a local outstanding school has opened up new and exciting opportunities for pupils' learning and personal development. Importantly, it has strengthened the school's capacity to improve even further.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed and build on the successful actions already taken to improve pupils' progress and attainment in reading by:
 - maintaining a strong focus on teaching reading comprehension skills, especially higher-order skills, such as inference, particularly at key stage 2
 - continuing to extend pupils' acquisition and understanding of vocabulary
 - ensuring that pupils continue to read an increasingly wide range of texts for pleasure and to enhance fluency and expression.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that pupils gain a deeper understanding of fundamental British values through the curriculum
 - extending the positive work on diversity to include all groups required by legislation.
- Continue to improve pupils' self-confidence and understanding of how to be successful learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following a challenging period since the school's last inspection, rapid improvement has occurred in the last 12 months. New senior leaders and governors have worked resolutely and successfully to bring about a sea change in the school's effectiveness. The local authority has supported the school admirably during this process.
- Parents and carers were understandably disappointed with the outcome of the school's last inspection. The succession of temporary headteachers in the year following that inspection, together with a number of prolonged staff absences, added to parents' frustration and many withdrew their children from the school.
- The turning point in the school's journey of improvement came in May 2018. At this time, a senior leader from an outstanding local primary school was seconded to the role of acting headteacher for a year. At the same time, the appointment of new and experienced governors strengthened the governing body. This included the position of chair of the governing body being taken on by the headteacher of another outstanding local primary school.
- Under this strong leadership team, the rate of improvement has been impressive. Leaders and governors are uncompromising in their drive to raise attainment and improve pupils' progress. Their high aspirations, unwavering sense of purpose and commitment to pupils and the community, are steering good improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes. The same qualities have enabled leaders to tackle challenging issues effectively, such as the impact that fewer pupils has had on the school's budget and staffing.
- The formal agreement in March this year to work collaboratively with the outstanding primary school, led by the chair of the governing body, has been another such decision to consolidate and build on the improvements to date. In March, the chair of the governing body relinquished this role to become the executive headteacher of both schools. A new head of school position was created, and this was filled in April. These measures provide a sustainable staffing and leadership plan for when the acting headteacher returns to his substantive post at the end of the summer term. Importantly, these decisions have strengthened the school's capacity to improve further.
- During his term as acting headteacher, this leader has been highly successful in gaining the admiration and trust of parents, both as a leader and teacher. He is also hugely popular with pupils. The praise the acting headteacher has received for his part in the school's improvement is well deserved. While parents and pupils will be sorry to see him leave at the end of the year, the school is being left in capable hands.
- The acting headteacher has worked successfully with governors and the local authority to address the issues for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Senior leaders and governors now have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and where further improvements are needed. The latter inform the school's improvement plan, which identifies clear actions and milestones for when these will be achieved. An example is the positive and determined action to improve reading across the school.

- Leaders have established a thorough and supportive system to check how effectively teaching secures good learning and progress. This includes regular reviews of pupils' work and teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements, as well as formal observations of teaching. In this small school, however, senior leaders are 'hands on'. Even when not teaching themselves, they are often in classrooms. This gives leaders a sharp insight to how well teaching is securing good learning and progress.
- Just as the acting headteacher provides an excellent role model for teaching, so too does the new executive headteacher. Their skills inspire genuine respect from staff who are motivated and eager to act on feedback to develop their practice. During the last year, staff have also benefited from bespoke local authority support and training. Positive and productive working relationships with staff in the collaborative school, including the sharing of skills, expertise and experience, are already being established.
- In the last year, the local authority has provided very effective support for the new curriculum leader. A thorough review of curriculum planning and organisation has occurred, with an emphasis on ensuring that pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Some subjects are taught discretely while others, such as history and geography, are taught as part of a topic. When deciding on topics, leaders take good account of pupils' views and interests.
- The curriculum for reading, writing and mathematics is planned and organised effectively. The strategies introduced this year to improve pupils' reading are working well but are still being embedded. Pupils' books show that they study a broad range of subjects, with content and tasks matched carefully to pupils' ages, prior attainment and capabilities. Physical education (PE) has a high profile. The curriculum for all subjects includes regular outdoor learning in the school's extensive grounds.
- A further review of the curriculum is imminent. This is to ensure that from September 2019, when pupils will be taught in one class, breadth and depth of learning in all subjects is maintained. Leaders are already discussing a number of innovative ideas about future curriculum development. Remaining at the heart of the curriculum is the aim to develop pupils as motivated, creative and independent learners.
- While the curriculum presents opportunities for pupils to learn about British values, these are not capitalised upon well enough. Consequently, although pupils have heard of British values, their understanding of what they mean is limited.
- A varied range of after-school clubs, visitors and visits enrich pupils' learning and make a good contribution to their academic and personal development. Pupils are looking forward to sharing residential and other curricular visits and activities with pupils from the collaborative school.
- Communication with parents is good. Leaders informed parents about the formal collaboration decision as soon as permissible. Newsletters have provided parents with clear information about how this will work and a meeting about the new situation is being held this month. Parents receive good information and advice about how to help their children stay safe, including when using technology. The very positive views of current parents reflect their satisfaction with the school's improvement and leaders' high aspirations for their children. Leaders' success is also attracting new families to join the school community. Parents' comments included, 'My children have come on leaps and bounds' and 'Staff are approachable, and nothing is too much trouble.'

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well and make a strong contribution to its development. They are knowledgeable and skilled and carry out their strategic role effectively.
- Governors work purposefully with leaders and hold them to account for the school's work and improvement. For example, governors scrutinise information and ask questions about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance.
- Financial expertise within the governing body ensures efficient use of the school's budget. The funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively to meet pupils' needs. Governors also make sure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the PE and sport funding, is used appropriately and having the desired impact on improving pupils' achievement, personal development and the quality of education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and staff know pupils very well and give their safety and protection the highest priority.
- Thorough checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with children. There is regular safeguarding training for all staff, including those who lead on this aspect of the school's work.
- Staff are watchful and alert to any potential problems. Records show that they are vigilant in sharing safeguarding concerns with the designated safeguarding leader. Where necessary, the school works cooperatively and effectively with professional agencies to support pupils in all aspects relevant to safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Well-considered appointments and a good programme of staff training have improved the quality of teaching. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning. Their good subject knowledge enables them to explain new ideas clearly. Teachers use questioning effectively to check that pupils understand what they are learning and the tasks they are given. Teachers reflect thoughtfully on their teaching and make effective adjustments to subsequent lessons to improve pupils' learning.
- Teachers are now far more successful in tailoring work to pupils' needs. During lessons, they regularly check the security of pupils' learning. They adapt work, as needed, to ensure that it provides optimum challenge and opportunities for pupils to succeed.
- Teachers now provide pupils with many opportunities to reason mathematically. They explain new mathematical ideas clearly and demonstrate processes expertly. Teachers expect pupils to explain their thinking and prove their answers. Lessons include a strong focus on ensuring that pupils develop a deep understanding of mathematical ideas through practical work and opportunities to apply their learning to solve problems. Pupils particularly enjoy the problem-solving activities on 'Challenge Fridays'.
- The teaching of reading is a current priority. Phonics is taught effectively and used successfully by pupils to read unfamiliar words. Teachers continuously focus on

increasing pupils' enjoyment of reading and developing their understanding of vocabulary. They read to pupils regularly and use a suitable range of strategies to help pupils understand what they read. The teaching of inference is receiving a lot of attention. Teachers provide pupils with different tactics and approaches to look for clues in texts to infer the author's meaning and require pupils to justify their understanding with evidence from the texts.

- Writing is taught effectively. Teachers use quality texts and pupils' own experiences to motivate pupils to write. They explain and demonstrate important features of different types of writing. Teachers use classroom display boards well to keep these features fresh in pupils' minds and to remind pupils about key vocabulary, spellings and grammar. Teachers now give pupils regular opportunities to develop longer pieces of writing, both in English and other subjects. There is good teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling, including through fun activities, such as the challenging outdoor grammar trail that pupils undertook during the inspection.
- Teachers know pupils extremely well and are successful in forging warm and supportive relationships with them. Teachers quickly identify the needs of vulnerable pupils, such as those with SEND, and take account of their needs in all lessons. Extra support is provided for pupils who need it to secure their learning.
- Teachers give much thought to planning activities to ignite pupils' curiosity and create a love of learning. During lessons, they continuously strive to involve pupils actively in their learning. Pupils say that they find learning interesting and appreciate teachers' efforts. They know that contributions are valued and encouraged, but some lack the confidence to contribute and are unwilling at times to have a go or take risks in their learning.
- Support staff make a good contribution to teaching and learning. They work well with teachers and have good relationships with pupils.
- Teachers ensure that classrooms are bright and welcoming. Displays celebrate pupils' achievements and support their learning. Teachers make excellent use of the school's well-developed outdoor facilities to bring a new dimension to learning and increase pupils' involvement and enjoyment.
- Homework is regularly set. It focuses mainly on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and is successful in consolidating pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have rightly prioritised the need to improve pupils' self-confidence and develop their self-awareness and understanding of how to be a successful learner. Involving pupils in forming new school values was an important part of this process. Pupils show a good understanding of these values and are able to explain what it means to 'be considerate, responsible, persevere, aim high and stand together'. They are justly proud of contributing to these values and to the beautiful artwork that declares them in the school's entrance.

- Developing a 'can do' attitude and pupils' resilience as learners threads through every aspect of the school's work. Leaders and staff miss no opportunity to praise pupils' efforts, boost their self-esteem and instil the message that it is 'OK to make mistakes' because these are learning opportunities.
- Assemblies make a significant contribution. In these small and intimate gatherings pupils learn the importance of qualities such as resilience. They sit enrapt when learning how famous authors, inventors, activists and sports people never allowed failure to stop their efforts to achieve their goals. As the teacher affirms each pupil's individual qualities at the end of the assembly, pupils' belief in themselves is boosted.
- All pupils are given responsibilities within the school. These include librarians, playground monitors, laptop monitors, tending the reading garden and helping to look after the school's chickens. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and recognise their work contributes to the smooth running of the school.
- Pupils have only good things to say about their school. They recall many examples of interesting lessons and activities and consider they are learning well. Pupils like their teachers and describe them as kind, helpful, caring and funny. They say that they would not be afraid to share any worries with teachers because they trust them and know they would help.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know the difference between bullying and general misbehaviour and about the different forms bullying can take.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the dangers of using the internet and of how to keep safe online. The school makes effective use of professional organisations to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of their rights and what they can do to stay safe from different types of abuse.
- Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and can explain how to keep healthy. They learn the risks and effects of smoking, alcohol and substance misuse. Pupils proudly explain how they have recently learned how to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Leaders are committed to ensuring pupils' mental well-being. Yoga and various counselling and therapy sessions are provided to help pupils learn techniques for relaxation, manage their feelings and emotions and develop resilience.
- In contrast to the many strong aspects of provision to foster pupils' personal development, the promotion of British values is fairly superficial. Within this, there are gaps in the extent to which pupils are taught about the full range of diversity in modern Britain.

There has been a good focus on increasing pupils' understanding of different religions, cultures and disability. Discussions about boys' and girls' roles in times gone by and fundraising events for people less fortunate than themselves also give pupils an insight to these aspects of diversity. The school's resources and displays generally reflect these aspects of diversity well. However, wider aspects of diversity, such as different families, relationships and gender identity, are not represented.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They show respect to staff and visitors.
- In lessons pupils behave very well. They listen carefully to their teachers and get on with the work they are given. Pupils are proud of the work they have done and try hard to present it neatly, in line with teachers' expectations.
- Pupils consider that behaviour is good and say that there is no bullying. Records of behaviour bear this out. Pupils' comments about behaviour included, 'We are all friends', 'No-one is mean' and 'We all help each other'.
- At breaktimes, pupils' sociable and amiable behaviour to each other was clearly evident in the dining hall and playground.
- Pupils and parents very much like the school's online behaviour-management system. Pupils are keen to earn points for good behaviour and parents like the way the system keeps them informed. Parents appreciate the opportunities the system provides for them to communicate with teachers.
- Leaders continuously promote the importance of regular attendance to pupils and parents. Effective systems are in place to monitor attendance and to follow up any rare, unexplained absences. Most pupils attend school regularly and are motivated to achieve the good attendance awards. Holidays in term time are not authorised. While the incidence of persistent absence has been above average, this is not within the school's control.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In relation to their prior attainment and capabilities, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Comparisons of pupils' end of key stage test and assessment results with national averages do not provide a wholly reliable picture of pupils' achievement. This is because the number of pupils in year groups is often very small and the range of needs can vary widely.
- Leaders do, however, make appropriate and effective use of test and assessment information, including that from statutory tests and assessments. They monitor each pupil's progress towards attaining at least the expected standards for their age and to check that no pupil is underachieving. Leaders also compare pupils' progress and attainment in different subjects to identify where improvements might be needed.
- In 2018, the school's end of key stage 2 test results showed that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics continued to be similar to pupils this age nationally. However, progress and attainment in reading was not as strong as in writing and mathematics. Leaders' review of pupils' reading test papers showed that it was pupils' comprehension skills, and especially inference, that had held them back.
- Leaders have taken determined actions to improve reading this year and these are having a positive effect. Pupils are reading more widely and often, including at home. They are developing fluency and expression in their reading. Opportunities to read to a

reading therapy dog are very popular. This initiative is having a particularly positive impact on motivating pupils who were previously reluctant readers. Comprehension skills are improving. Pupils are becoming better at identifying inference in texts, but while some are quickly getting the hang of this concept, others are still insecure.

- Across the school, standards of attainment in mathematics are rising. Most pupils are attaining standards in line with those expected for their age. Pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills are promoted very effectively across the curriculum. In computing, for example, pupils use algorithms and coding to design online projects and games. In geography, pupils learn how to use coordinates, while in design and technology they recognise the importance of accurate measuring when making bird boxes to hang outdoors. Pupils frequently record the information they gather in science and other projects in graphs and charts.
- Since the last inspection, attainment in writing has improved. Attainment for most pupils is in line with that expected for their age. The many opportunities pupils have to develop their writing, including across the curriculum, supports their good progress. Pupils proudly show examples of their writing about the First World War and research projects about different European countries. They learn to edit their writing and pay attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as content.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work in science, where standards of attainment have improved significantly. When talking about memorable learning experiences, pupils recalled investigating which metal was the best conductor of electricity and learning about air resistance by testing the small parachutes they had made outdoors.
- The number of pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND is small. However, they represent a notable proportion of the population in this small school. Pupils in both groups make good progress. They receive good support for their needs and in addressing any barriers to learning they might have.

School details

Unique reference number	119225
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10087843

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Alan Whittaker
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Purcell (Executive headteacher), Mr Iain Pearson (Acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01257 423107
Website	www.mossylea.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@mossylea.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- After the previous inspection the school experienced high staff turnover, including in leadership. Many parents were unhappy with the situation and moved their children to other schools.
- The local authority’s monitoring and intervention team has provided, and continues to provide, significant support for the school.
- In May 2018, the deputy headteacher from a local outstanding local primary school was seconded as acting headteacher. A headteacher and national leader of education from a different outstanding local primary school (St George’s Church of England Primary School in Chorley) became the chair of the governing body. Other experienced governors also joined the governing body. The composition of the governing body has changed significantly since the previous inspection.

- On 1 March 2019, a formal collaboration was formed between Wrightington Mossy Lea and St George's Church of England Primary School. The headteacher of St George's became the executive headteacher of both schools. A new chair of the governing body was appointed. An experienced teacher from the school's staff was appointed to the role of head of school from September 2019.
- The acting headteacher will remain in post until July 2019. The executive headteacher is spending a day each week at the school. From September 2019, the executive headteacher will spend the equivalent of two days a week at Wrightington Mossy Lea and three days at St George's.
- Currently, pupils are organised into two classes each morning and for some lessons in the afternoon. From September 2019 there will be one class.
- All pupils in the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school's early years provides for Reception-age children. At the time of the inspection, there were no children in Reception or Year 1.
- The school provides a pre-school breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in both classes. The acting headteacher and executive headteacher accompanied the inspector on a number of these observations.
- The inspector reviewed pupils' work in books and on display and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and their plans for improvement. The inspector examined information about safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector held discussions with the acting headteacher, executive headteacher and head of school. The inspector met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. A separate discussion was held with the school's local authority improvement partner and the head of the local authority's monitoring and improvement team.
- The inspector held a formal discussion with five pupils from key stage 2 and spoke with other pupils informally. One response to Ofsted's online pupils' questionnaire was reviewed.
- The inspector spoke with some parents as they brought their children to school. Five responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, were considered, including three written responses. A recent parental survey undertaken by the school, to which nine parents responded, was also reviewed. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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