

Mab Lane Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131480
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	315812
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Barlow
Headteacher	Mrs J Todd
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Mab Lane Liverpool Merseyside L12 6QL
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. It has a Nursery unit and a special needs unit for those children of Nursery age who have speech and language difficulties. The school shares a site with a Children's Centre. Almost all pupils come from the immediate locality and are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also high. The local area is one of significant social and economic disadvantage. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People status, Basic Skills and Inclusion Charter Marks and Early Years accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mab Lane Junior Mixed and Infant School is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They take pride in their school and form excellent relationships with their teachers and other adults. Pupils value the opportunities they have, such as the school council and the Buddy system, which enable them to take responsibility and make decisions. The quality of the care and guidance they receive is excellent. The school works very effectively both through the work of the Mentor and with outside agencies to remove significant barriers to pupils' learning. Individual pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is closely tracked and challenging learning targets set. Pupils understand their targets and they understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to make sensible choices for healthy living. The school follows government guidelines to ensure pupils' safety and the safe recruitment of staff.

By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. Nonetheless, this represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. Action taken by the school to raise standards has been very successful and has led to significant year on year improvement. Pupils are becoming more confident, particularly in their writing and this is having a significant impact upon their achievement across the curriculum.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, pupils' progress is good throughout the school. Assessment information is usually used very effectively to meet pupils' individual needs in lessons. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported in lessons. However, some opportunities are missed for children to work independently of the teacher and to learn from others in lessons.

Curricular provision is good. It is well planned and enables pupils to develop their skills through a variety of experiences, which interest them. The school has worked hard, and in the most part successfully, to improve the quality and scope of the curriculum, especially in writing. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 who are still at the early stages of learning have too few opportunities to learn through structured play activities. Pupils' experiences are effectively enhanced by a good range of out-of-class activities, outside visits and specialist teaching.

Leadership and management are outstanding, enabling pupils to overcome significant barriers to learning. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction. She has created a strong team who work together very effectively. As a result, there has been excellent improvement since the last inspection with a significant improvement in standards. The capacity to improve further is excellent. Governors are very well informed and provide very strong support. The school provides excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children learn effectively in a welcoming, stimulating environment. Most begin school with skills that are well below those typical for their age. These are particularly poor in personal and social skills. Children quickly settle into school and enjoy learning. This is because teaching and learning are good and the Foundation Stage provides a curriculum which is tailored to children's needs and interests. Teachers quickly establish children's starting points and give effective support or challenge. As a result, all children achieve well in

most areas of the curriculum. However, at times, opportunities are missed to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world effectively through play. Children's behaviour and attitudes to school are good and they make excellent progress in their personal and social development. This is because all staff have high expectations and the levels of care, support and guidance are outstanding. Staff work well in partnership with parents and other providers to support all children's needs. This is particularly effective through the work of the speech and language unit which enables children with specific learning difficulties to make the same good progress as their classmates. Leadership and management are good and teachers and other adults work very effectively as a team. The overall provision and the impact it makes on children's learning is regularly reviewed and effective action is taken to ensure all children achieve well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to learn through structured play activities so that those who are still working towards the early learning goals can achieve them.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to work independently and learn from others in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to achieve well from their starting points, although a significant number of children in Year 1 are still working well below the standards expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. This, however, represents good overall achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. The progress pupils make in developing their writing skills is outstanding. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly over the last three years and continue to rise. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make the same good progress as their peers as a result of the well-considered support they receive in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

During their time at this school pupils develop into confident, articulate and mature young people with an enthusiasm for learning. They are very well prepared for the next stage of education and the wider world. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is outstanding. They show respect and concern for others and behaviour is exemplary. In lessons they listen attentively to the teacher and each other and are keen to participate in activities. They have excellent relationships with adults in the school. When they are given the opportunity, they work very well together in pairs and small groups. They relish the many different sporting opportunities and extra-curricular clubs. They think learning is fun. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They play an important role in the day-to-day running of the school, for example, as school council representatives and 'buddies', helping younger pupils in the playground. They take their responsibilities seriously and feel that their views are valued and acted upon. For instance, most recently, they have been concerned with improving the lunchtime menus. Their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is outstanding and a large proportion of pupils take part in sports activities after school. Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance remains below average, although there have been recent improvements and rates of attendance rise as the pupils go through the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some instances of outstanding practice. In the most effective lessons, presentations are very clear, so that pupils rapidly understand new ideas. Activities are interesting and fun and immediately motivate pupils. Tasks are well sequenced so that pupils build effectively on what has gone before. Pupils make most progress when they are given the opportunity to investigate ideas for themselves or to discuss their ideas with a partner. Where this is the case, they speak confidently to explain their ideas and present their work to a wider audience. In some lessons opportunities are missed to do this and, in others, steps in learning are sometimes missing so that some pupils struggle to complete the tasks set. In all lessons teaching assistants give very good support to lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables these pupils to participate confidently in whole-class activities and to complete tasks successfully. Assessment information is used effectively to enable pupils to succeed and pupils themselves are beginning to evaluate their own and each other's work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the learning needs of most pupils. However, the curriculum in Key Stage 1 does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn through carefully planned and structured play activities so that those who are still working towards the expected early learning goals for children at the end of their Reception year can achieve them. The school is aware of the need to develop links between curriculum areas across the school and has begun to do so. This has been most successful in stimulating pupils' interest in writing and in investigating ideas in science. However, in other areas this is at an early stage of development and the full impact is yet to be seen. Pupils' learning is further enhanced through opportunities to learn French. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to support and extend pupils' learning although the school is aware there is still scope to improve this. The personal, social and health education programme is particularly successful in promoting pupils' social, moral and personal development. Activities outside the classroom such as the visit from the school nurse, trips and residential experiences enhance the curriculum, excite pupils and inspire them in their work. A large proportion of pupils eagerly participates in sports, the arts, crafts and other activities after school. The school works very well in partnership with parents and carers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are given outstanding care, guidance and support. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to remove barriers to their learning. Robust systems have been developed to support the needs of pupils, their families and the local community. As parents say, 'Everyone is included and no one is left out.' Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school and because of the excellent pastoral care provided, their behaviour is exemplary and they develop a real love of learning. All aspects of child protection, risk assessment procedures and other health and safety measures are in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the skilled support from learning support assistants and the special learning

programmes the school provides for them. The school has very effective and rigorous systems to track and record pupils' progress. This means that teachers are in a good position to plan lessons that build on pupils' previous learning and to show them how to improve their work. Targets in English and mathematics are clearly set and pupils are regularly asked to check if they are meeting them. Academic support and guidance are also outstanding. Teachers' marking gives very clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work and regularly celebrates their successes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school's evaluation of its progress is accurate and improvement planning is based firmly upon rigorous analysis of pupils' progress. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and a very clear direction. She is highly committed to ensuring the well-being of the staff and to developing their professional skills. Training is well thought out and staff have frequent opportunities to hone their skills. The headteacher is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and, indeed, by all staff who are all committed to raising standards. This very strong staff team works extremely well to help pupils overcome significant barriers to learning. Action to improve provision has been very successful and as a result, standards have improved significantly over the last three years, and continue to do so. All staff work very effectively together and play a full part in the school's self-evaluation and in development planning. Roles and responsibilities are clear and the senior leadership team work closely with class teachers to check their plans and pupils' progress on a regular basis. Very effective checking systems are in place, pupils' progress is tracked closely and challenging yet realistic targets set. Governors are very well informed, play a full part in the life of the school and act very effectively as critical friends.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. I'm sure you will be interested, but not surprised, to hear that yours is a good school with some things about it that are outstanding.

Your behaviour is excellent and you get on with the adults in your school extremely well. You play an important role in improving your school. We were impressed by the way you help younger children, especially in the playground and in the dining room. You are also exceptionally well looked after by the adults in the school.

The teachers have been working hard recently to help you improve your writing and this has been very successful. You are taught well and this helps you to make good progress. We were particularly impressed by how well many of you worked together in pairs and small groups to explore ideas for yourselves in lessons. We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to do this and to learn from one another.

Younger children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress too and thoroughly enjoy their learning because of the way their teachers plan exciting activities for them. Younger children learn very well through play so we have asked the school to make sure they have more opportunities to do this, where they need to do so, in Key Stage 1.

The headteacher and the staff do an excellent job in keeping track of your progress and work together very well as a team to make things even better.

We hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your learning. We wish you every success in the future.