

Lower Kersal Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105886
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	355858
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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 of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Barnett
Headteacher	Mr Lee Ashton
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed eight teachers. They spoke with governors, managers, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies, school development plans and the School Improvement Partner's reports. In total, 41 parental questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside 75 questionnaires completed by the pupils and three completed by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- improvements in progress and standards, especially at Key Stage 2
- how effectively information from the assessment of pupils' work is used to set challenging targets for learning
- how effectively managers at all levels check on performance and drive the school forwards.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average sized school serving an urban area, close to Salford city centre. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is three times the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and around 25% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A total of 12 languages are spoken in school and 15% of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The incidence of pupils entering or leaving school part way through their education is higher than that seen nationally.

At the time of inspection the building of a Children's Centre on the school site was nearing completion. This will offer pre-school and extended care facilities in the new academic year. Among several accreditations the school holds the Activemark, Eco Schools Green Flag, International Schools and Healthy Schools awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school works in challenging circumstances. It provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and has strengths in pastoral areas. The good care, guidance and support provided for pupils results in their good personal development and behaviour. Under the energetic and determined leadership of the headteacher, there has been a concerted and effective effort to boost pupils' achievement and the school is improving rapidly. Younger children now make more headway before starting Year 1 and, for older children, progress in mathematics and reading has improved. Senior leaders keep a constant eye on provision and pupils' achievement, taking effective action to support those who are not meeting expectations. With an accurate view of the school's performance, they fully acknowledge that standards, although generally improving well, need to rise further. They share a clear ambition for the future and the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Children are now making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Outstanding leadership for this age group has led to many improvements in provision and children's progress. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 achievement is satisfactory overall and there are pockets of good progress, for example, in reading. Current attainment is broadly average although it is stronger in mathematics and reading than in writing. Teaching has a satisfactory impact on learning overall. Some is good and outstanding but there is a small amount of inadequate practice. Higher expectations are helping to eliminate the underachievement from previous years. However, managers recognise that the proportion of good teaching needs to rise further if the school is to meet its own challenging targets. The monitoring of teaching and learning by middle managers is in the early stages of development but is not yet rigorous enough to eliminate variations in practice. For example, there are lessons where some pupils are not stretched fully or where others find the work is too difficult. Opportunities for some highly skilled teachers and trained teaching assistants to disseminate and share their good practice with others are limited.

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features, such as the exciting range of after-school clubs and the programme for personal education. However, there are limited opportunities for extended writing. Good links with outside agencies ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported. The school has developed good partnerships with parents. Many attend courses to learn how to support their children's learning at home and this is making a good impact on progress. Good community cohesion results in harmonious relationships between pupils of different ages and religious and ethnic groups.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress and attainment in writing to the level achieved in reading by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities for extended writing, both in English lessons and across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching and eliminate the inadequate practice by:
 - ensuring that tasks consistently match the needs and abilities of all pupils
 - develop the role of the middle managers in monitoring teaching and learning
 - facilitate the sharing of good and excellent practice in teaching and learning among staff.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Boys and girls make equal progress and say they thoroughly enjoy learning. In one lesson, for example, some Year 2 pupils had great fun competing to find multiples of numbers. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Progress for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory but variable between age groups. Effective support for pupils who enter mid-year enables them to settle quickly and they often make good strides in their learning.

Historically, pupils have entered Key Stage 1 with a below average range of skills. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is currently satisfactory and improving strongly. Across Key Stage 2 progress is accelerating and pupils are increasingly meeting the challenging targets that their teachers set. Many pupils are making up for shortfalls in their previous learning so the legacy of underachievement is being systematically eradicated. However, progress is unequal between year groups. It is generally weaker in lower Key Stage 2 and accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Pupils do not do as well as they could in writing. An increased emphasis on learning about letters and sounds and comprehension skills has boosted progress in reading. Most pupils write in different styles, spelling logically and using correct punctuation. For example, they can produce a good introduction to a report or write a character description. Because they have too few extended writing sessions, both in English lessons and across the curriculum, they are less successful at orchestrating these skills into a complete piece of work.

Pupils are polite, considerate of each other and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They demonstrate a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy plenty of exercise. They assert that they feel safe and have a good awareness of potential dangers, for example, when using the internet. Attendance has improved and currently is average. The number of persistent absentees has been considerably reduced. Pupils are soundly prepared for their future education and work because they make satisfactory progress and have good attitudes. Projects such as 'Higher Futures 4

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U' help pupils to develop high aspirations for their future careers. The school council ensures that pupils' views are represented in the decision-making process and the Eco council is instrumental in promoting environmental awareness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies widely from inadequate to some that is outstanding. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Good relationships exist and pupils say their teachers provide lots of help. In the good and outstanding lessons, the pace of learning is swift, tasks are challenging and excellent use is made of prompts and 'handy hints' to support pupils' learning. Many improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, but not all are consistently embedded. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. More frequent and accurate assessments of learning have been introduced and are generally used effectively to set work at different levels of difficulty. Sometimes, however, work is too difficult for some or it provides insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. This is the main factor behind the inadequate teaching. Teaching assistants

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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generally provide effective support, especially for pupils who are not meeting their targets. There are occasions, however, where they provide simple solutions for pupils rather than guiding and extending their thinking.

Links between subjects are developing well and the school provides a wide range of experiences for pupils in the arts. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing. Reading intervention strategies have resulted in rapid progress for some pupils. The school is now building on this good work through planning further programmes, for example, to boost writing and speaking skills. Many pupils derive great benefit from an interesting range of after-school activities, such as the boxercise and street dancing clubs.

The school takes good care of its pupils and their welfare is at the heart of its work. Pupils are cocooned within this safe, nurturing environment. Responses to questionnaires from pupils and parents overwhelmingly agree that children are safe. The learning mentor successfully promotes pupils' self-esteem and social skills and the Family First project supports families well. With the help of outside agencies, the school is now focused on eliminating the remaining element of persistent absenteeism. Effective systems to deal with any incident of bullying are established and pupils say that adults act swiftly to address any concerns or worries they express. Supervision is good, the building and grounds are secure and there is a safe hand-over of younger pupils to parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision is instrumental in maintaining good care for pupils and in providing a clear direction for the school. At present, the management system is cumbersome and tasks are not distributed efficiently between senior and middle managers. As a result monitoring by the middle managers is not sufficiently developed to ensure that provision is as effective as it can be. For example, the sharing of skills and peer tutoring has been effective in improving aspects of teaching but is not used to best effect on a regular basis. In some cases, there is a lack of co-ordination between the work of key staff with responsibilities for supporting learning and those who are responsible for addressing pupils' pastoral needs. Whilst this does not affect the quality of care provided, it means that some work is needlessly duplicated.

Community cohesion is promoted well in school and through involvement in community

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projects. For example, some pupils were involved in a local dance festival and they work with parents and carers on after-school activities, such as gardening or art work. The equalities policy ensures that groups of pupils have full and equal access to all activities and, for example, pupils learning English as an additional language have the support they need. Safeguarding measures are good across all areas of the school's work. There are tried and tested systems for child protection and good-quality staff training. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and many attend courses so they know how to support learning at home. Governors bring a good level of expertise to support management. Through their newly-formed school effectiveness committee, they have a secure overview of standards and achievement. They are now planning to develop a more active role in monitoring and evaluating some areas of performance to the same depth as others.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they enter the Nursery, most children's skills are below those expected for their age and some children are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Their progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and, in some cases, outstanding. By the end of the Reception Year, attainment is average. This marks a good improvement on previous years and is largely due to better assessment and planning, together with higher expectations and excellent links with parents. Exceptional organisation, for example of the key workers, ensures that children's personal development is paramount. Consequently, their behaviour and attitudes are good.

The Nursery and Reception environments are exciting and welcoming. Activities are well

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organised to inspire children, whilst encouraging independence and curiosity. The outdoor areas provide good opportunities for purposeful play and learning but continual access by the Reception children is denied because of the physical constraints of the building. The school is investigating every avenue to address the problem so that the two classes have more opportunities to interact and also to extend the element of free choice for the Reception children. Welfare arrangements meet all requirements. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers result in a very effective induction process and on-going support for learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have a generally positive view of the school. All of those who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children's experience of school is a happy one. There are commendations for the good quality of care, the information received, together with the quality of teaching and leadership. They feel that their children are safe and encouraged to live healthy lifestyles. Inspectors agree with their views. No major issues were raised but a very few felt that they did not receive enough information about their child's progress or how they could support learning at home. The inspection finds that parents have a good amount of information through meetings, reports, opportunities for informal discussions with teachers and through the courses held in school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lower Kersal Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	63	13	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	56	16	39	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	56	17	41	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	63	15	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	49	17	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	51	20	49	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	41	23	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	44	23	56	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	51	20	49	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	39	22	54	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	56	18	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	61	16	39	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lower Kersal Community Primary School, Salford, M7 3TN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and I when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the smiles and help you gave us.

Your school is a safe and happy place and provides you with a satisfactory education. I would like to say thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with the inspectors. It is good to know how much you enjoy your lessons. I agree that your school and Eco councillors do a good job in representing your views and helping to care for the environment. I think you are very clever to be growing flowers, vegetables and fruit as well as making your own garden benches!

You are keen to learn and work hard. Those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2 you are making better progress in reading and mathematics. Well done! I think it is time now to look at boosting your writing skills. I have, therefore, asked your teachers to:

- make sure that tasks set match your abilities and help you to move forwards with your learning
- increase the opportunities given to you to write independently in lessons
- make more regular checks in lessons to ensure that any improvements they introduce are working and are adopted in all classes
- share their skills so they can learn from each other.

You can help by continuing to try hard and getting on so well together. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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