

Lower Kersal Community Primary School

St Aidan's Grove, Salford, Manchester, M7 3TN

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations. Activities interest and inspire pupils in a wide range of subjects and lead to good progress being made by all groups of pupils across the school. By the time they leave they reach standards that are above national average, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is well developed through a wide range of activities and visits.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well; have positive attitudes towards learning and show pride in their school. Pupils' contribution to school life is valued. They undertake responsibilities with maturity and enthusiasm.
- Governance of the school is strong. The governing body has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is rigorous in holding leaders to account.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. Together with other leaders, he has ensured improvements to pupils' achievement and to the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although most pupils reach the standards expected, too few pupils reach higher levels of attainment.
- Progress in writing in Key Stage 1 is not as rapid as in other subjects.
- In some lessons not enough opportunity is given for pupils to make best use of the guidance given in marking.
- Although attendance is improving over time there are still a small number of families whose children's attendance is not good enough.
- While the leadership of subjects has improved some subject leaders' analysis of the impact of their actions on learning is not yet sharp enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, looked at work on display and listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors looked in detail at pupils' exercise books, information about pupils' achievement, school development planning and the school's view of its own performance. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings and a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and the way in which the school allocates pupil premium funding.
- There was insufficient response to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to allow any analysis, but inspectors took account of 40 responses to the school's most recent questionnaire and spoke with parents arriving at the school at the start of the day.
- There was a meeting with four representatives of the Governing Body, including the Chair, and a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior staff, and had discussions with pupils. Inspectors also met with middle leaders and teachers and others responsible for pupils' learning.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

John Nixon, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennifer Platt

Additional Inspector

Peter McKay

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have been adopted from care) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average while the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is nearly twice the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are taught in nine single year group classes.
- Many of the pupils in the Key Stage1 did not attend the school's Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more pupils make better than expected progress to reach the higher levels of attainment by:
 - enhancing the teaching of phonics so that pupils make best use of these skills to improve their spelling in written work
 - ensuring teachers give sufficient opportunities for pupils to use the guidance given in marking to make their work better
 - ensuring that all lessons and activities have clear and high learning expectations
 - sharpening the accuracy of assessments by class teachers who are new or returning to the school, and ensuring that these are used to plan lesson to have the best effect on learning, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1.
- Improve leadership and management by sharpening subject leaders' analysis of the impact of their actions on pupils' learning and its use to make their development planning even better.
- Improve the attendance of pupils at school by continuing to rigorously pursue, by all appropriate means, families who stop their children regularly attending school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those which are typical for their age. Skills in communication, language and literacy and those related to mathematical understanding are well below those typically found for their age. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, all groups of children, including those who are most able and those with disabilities and special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points to enter Key Stage 1 at a level of development close to that expected for their age.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013, pupils of all groups, including those for which English is an additional language, achieved levels above those seen nationally. Pupils are strongly improving their skills at linking letters to sound but sometimes do not carry these skills forward into their writing to aid spelling.
- Progress is accelerating in Key Stage 1. Attainment in 2013 improved rapidly to be in line with the national average thereby showing good progress. Current school data show rates of progress across the key stage are in line with that typically expected in reading, writing and mathematics. However, current attainment is lower than in 2013, due to two thirds of the cohort beginning the key stage with levels of development well below that which is expected. Work in some books in Year 2 suggests that some assessments are overgenerous in writing, particularly for those pupils attaining the higher levels.
- In Key Stage 2, the progress of all pupils, including those who are most able, is good due to the good and increasingly outstanding teaching they receive.
- By the time most pupils leave Year 6, they are ready for their next phase of education. Overall, attainment in mathematics, reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling is above that found nationally; in mathematics pupils are generally two terms ahead while in writing they are one term ahead of that found nationally. Reading attainment is more closely aligned with the national picture for attainment. However, there are examples of very high achievement in reading in the school, particularly the growing love of classic British literature exhibited by some pupils who attend the Shakespeare club.
- The proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading and mathematics is well above that seen nationally in 2013.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, generally achieve at least as well and often better than other pupils by the time they leave. The proportion of them attaining the expected levels for their age in 2013 was above that seen nationally for mathematics, reading and writing. The school's information on pupils' progress shows that these proportions have been further improved.
- Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs make strong progress across the school but particularly in Year 6, due to good-quality targeted support. This is accelerating their rates of progress and closing the attainment gap between them and their peers.
- There are increasing numbers of pupils for which English is an additional language entering the school. These pupils do well and make similar progress to their peers due to the quality of teaching and support they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and work in books shows some teaching to be outstanding. Teachers mostly provide good learning experiences and, as a result, pupils make good progress. This matches the school's evaluation of teaching over time.
- Learning is good because teachers provide a wide and rich curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage activities are varied and stimulating. Children are encouraged to participate because adults join in the activities. Those who are reluctant are supported in their learning

because of the good relationships between staff and children. However, in a small number of activities the expectations of what children should learn are not as sharply focused as they could be.

- Teaching assistants play a valuable part in helping pupils to make good progress. They are used effectively by teachers to support pupils in class and through small group sessions that focus on specific aspects that pupils need help with. All pupils benefit from this support. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs use this support well to make good progress.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well, particularly in Key Stage 2, resulting in pupils accelerating progress to reach and exceed the levels of attainment expected for their age. For example, in one Year 6 lesson, pupils of all abilities successfully undertook detective work to solve a burglary using clues presented as algebraic formulae. However, in some lessons, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1, pupils' skills are not systematically developed leading to some pupils making slower progress in this subject.
- The teaching of phonics has been overhauled by the school leading to the introduction of a systematic scheme of work that prepares children well to reach the required standard. However, once pupils have reached this standard they are not always given the opportunity to enhance their skills and apply them to improve their spelling in written work.
- Lessons start promptly, especially in the morning where children are warmed up for learning by a regular dance session led enthusiastically by the headteacher.
- Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge in a wide range of subjects and use this to develop pupils' understanding. Work in pupils' books shows increased quality in the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics and increased rigour in the feedback regarding subject knowledge given by teachers.
- There are regular occasions when teachers benefit from the expertise of other staff. Teachers and teaching assistants meet regularly to share their expertise and train each other to improve their skills. Specialist language and music teaching is having an impact on improving pupils' skills in French and brass, while a sports coach is extending teachers' skills in physical education and sport.
- Questioning is used well in most lessons to challenge pupils to explain their reasons for answers. However, some teachers and teaching assistants are not as adept at using questioning as others. Where this occurs, this slows the pace of learning.
- Teachers mark work frequently and with increasing academic rigour in subjects other than English and mathematics. Their feedback is nearly always high quality and often gives details of how to improve. However, pupils are not always given opportunities to use this advice or apply this advice to make the best progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Policies are well written and all staff apply procedures rigorously. This results in a safe and secure environment which supports good attitudes to learning and behaviour. Teachers are well trained in child protection and take their roles seriously. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and trust teachers and other adults to help them if they have a problem.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are on the internet, because of regular and effective teaching in lessons and at other times. Visitors such as local fire and police officers and materials about child protection and online safety are used effectively to help keep pupils safe.
- Nearly all children behave well in lessons because of the high expectations placed upon them by teachers and other adults. However, some children do not concentrate well enough on learning to make the best progress, when the work set for them is too easy or too difficult, for example.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is good. They are polite and show consideration and respect for each other and adults. They take responsibility for jobs, such as gardening and looking after the wide variety of animals in school including hens, fish, a tortoise and a red bellied toad.

- Bullying is rare because of the actions taken by school to educate pupils about it. Pupils are very aware of the different types of bullying including homophobic bullying and 'racial slurs'. Older pupils demonstrate good understanding of the impact such activities might have on others and understand that these will not be tolerated in their learning community.
- Pupils say they like coming to school because of the range of activities available to them and because the school helps them to learn. Attendance at after-school and lunchtime clubs such as dodge ball, boxercise, athletics, gardening club and the Shakespeare Club is good.
- Pupils' attendance is below that seen nationally. Persistent absence over the last year was higher than that found nationally and attributable to a small number of families. However, attendance is improving because of the robust actions taken by school leaders, including the use of the courts to impose fines and other measures.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved since the previous inspection in October 2012 because of the determination and high expectations of the headteacher and other senior leaders which are shared and unreservedly supported by the staff.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching because of their regular and rigorous monitoring activities. Where teaching has fallen short of what is expected, leaders have taken swift and decisive action to successfully address it.
- Performance management of staff is good. Targets set for staff are challenging and directly linked to pupil outcomes and national standards with clear links to teachers' pay progression.
- School development planning is closely linked to the detailed and accurate self-evaluation and results in appropriate objectives for future improvements being set. This includes the continued raising of expectations and challenge, particularly in writing for some pupils in Key Stage 1 and the honing of assessment skills to improve the accuracy of some assessments for some teachers who are new to the school or returning from absence.
- Middle leadership has improved significantly. Subject leaders have strong subject knowledge and are used effectively to plan and deliver improvements in their subject, which is reflected in the quality of work seen in pupils' books. They are regularly held to account by senior leaders and governors. However, some subject leaders still need to further sharpen their skills in analysing the impact of their actions on learning.
- The school's curriculum is broad and gives many opportunities for pupils of all abilities to participate. Work seen around school demonstrates a greater depth of subject knowledge being taught and some very high standards of pupils' achievement, particularly in art; for example the work done by Year 2 in batik relating to the Aztecs and other fashion work that has been displayed at the Manchester Art Gallery.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils take responsibility for aspects of school life. The school council is an active part of the school and has advised the headteacher about the effectiveness of the induction process for new teachers and been responsible for the installation of additional outdoor play equipment.
- Leaders ensure that the school and its pupils play an active role in the community. Recently, pupils raised funds for a local old people's home through a dress up day and the school is used regularly by the local community.
- Leaders have ensured the primary school sports funding has a positive impact on participation and well-being. The school has employed a coach to deliver a wide variety of sports to pupils in all year groups and also provide training for staff to build future capacity to sustain the provision. Additionally, the lease of a new minibus means that pupils participate in an increasing number of competitive events.
- The local authority knows this school well due to an increased focus since the last inspection. The support and challenge has been well received and has led to rapid and significant improvements, particularly in the governance of the school.
- A small number of parents feel they receive too little information about their children's progress.

The school recognises it could do more to communicate with these parents and has taken appropriate action including the provision of parent drop-in sessions and an internet blog. End-of-year reports are detailed and clearly outline what has been done and achieved but do not contain sufficient details about what the next steps for improvement are.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governance of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection because of the support by the local authority and the thirst of the governors themselves to improve.
- The governing body is made up of community representatives, including parents, all of whom share a passion to make the school the best it can be.
- Governors take a 'hands-on' approach in monitoring and challenging the impact of actions to improve standards through regular attendance at half termly progress meetings and termly 'headline meetings'. They rigorously hold the school's leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- Governors have a clear understanding how the pupil premium and sports funding secure improvements and evaluate the impact of this spending at regular intervals. Governors are well prepared for their roles due to their professional expertise, their own rigorous self-evaluation and commitment to training.
- Governors ensure that statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105886
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	442378

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	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Dickinson
Headteacher	Lee Ashton
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2012
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