

Knotty Ash Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104550
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	377094
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead inspector	Brian Holmes

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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Comerford
Headteacher	Tim Byrne
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Brian Holmes
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 21 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 different teachers and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they did. Discussions took place with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at its assessment data, evidence of activities and events, information about the curriculum, safeguarding arrangements and monitoring and evaluation documents. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as 49 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Most pupils are from a White British background with very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is broadly average, with a higher than average proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school is specifically resourced for pupils with hearing impairment and/or profound deafness. The school has achieved Healthy School status and holds the Basic Skills quality mark. The school meets the current floor standard which sets the minimum attainment and progress standards set by the government. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is in a state of transition with no permanent leader in place at the time of the inspection. The headteacher has, very recently, taken temporary charge of the role.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. The school is not outstanding because teaching, while good, is not strong enough to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress. Senior leaders have recognised that there is a need to improve further pupils' achievement in writing and to strengthen leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- From starting points below average on entry to the Nursery class, pupils make consistently good progress through the school and leave Year 6 with skills which are above average. Attainment is highest in reading. Achievement in writing has improved rapidly but remains a focus for the school. While pupils have targets for improving their writing and make good use of these in English lessons, they do not apply these same targets with sufficient rigour when developing their writing skills in all their subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good. This was evident in lessons and when inspectors looked at pupils' work. Assessment information is used effectively in most classes to plan learning and to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, particularly the most able.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Their attitudes and behaviour make a positive contribution to their learning.
- Leadership is effective, fostering an inclusive and harmonious atmosphere where all pupils are happy and get on well with each other. Self-evaluation is accurate and, as a result, there has been rapid improvement in the progress of pupils in English. The management of teachers' performance and the leadership of teaching are both good. At the time of the inspection, leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage was in a state of transition. Children achieve well but assessment information systems are not always used effectively enough to provide an accurate picture of the progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to use and apply their writing targets in all their subjects.

- Strengthen leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring assessment information systems are sharper and used more effectively to measure children's attainment and progress in the Nursery class.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress from their starting points across all key stages. Good progress across the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that pupils join Key Stage 1 at levels just below expectations for their age. Children engage enthusiastically in their learning outdoors with Nursery and Reception children sharing resources. Pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is broadly average. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average and pupils make good progress. Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 2 and improves to be above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils have good comprehension skills and strategies for decoding unfamiliar words. Older pupils demonstrate good higher order skills of inference and deduction. The school has focused on improving pupils' progress in English in Key Stage 2 and raising attainment in writing, in particular. While there has been significant improvement in most year groups, senior leaders recognise that this is a work in progress. While pupils have opportunities to write in other subjects, opportunities are missed to raise their achievement in writing by applying writing targets to these pieces of work.

In lessons, pupils typically experience a good quality of learning, enjoying good opportunities to work with other pupils in pairs and small groups. This was seen in Year 6, when pupils investigated sources of information about the sinking of the Titanic to establish their understanding of primary and secondary sources of information. Different groups of pupils, including pupils who are profoundly deaf, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, all make good progress from their different starting points. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school meets their children's needs well, that their children make good progress and that the school helps them to support their children's learning. Inspection findings support these views.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good and teachers deliver a broad and well-balanced curriculum. As a result, all pupils make good progress over time, including those pupils who are profoundly deaf. Adults foster very good relationships with pupils,

which results in a good climate for learning in all classes. Teachers make good use of assessment information from pupils' prior learning to ensure that all pupils' needs are met and learning is challenging. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning as seen in a Year 5 numeracy lesson when pupils identified and calculated angles with additional challenges for more-able pupils. Teachers use a good range of strategies and approaches to engage pupils in their learning, as seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson when pupils engaged in role play to use expressions and actions to show characters in the story of Cinderella. Other adults are used effectively in classes to support pupils' learning, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils who are profoundly deaf are taught well in small groups and have their needs specifically met. When in larger classes, adults and other pupils 'sign' for them. Assessment is used effectively in lessons to check pupils' understanding, both through effective questioning and through intervention with groups and the whole class. Pupils have a good understanding of the marking code which enables them to know how to improve their work. Where this practice is most effective, pupils evaluate their own work with confidence. However, pupils do not apply their targets in all of their learning, so opportunities are missed to improve achievement in writing in all subjects. Marking in pupils' books gives pupils a clear idea of the next steps that are needed to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers spend too much time explaining activities and ideas and, when this occurs, pupils have fewer opportunities to practise and develop their skills.

Teaching effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, both through the curriculum and through other activities. Pupils were encouraged to think of others in an assembly about feelings. In their topic work, pupils have studied life and culture in South Africa. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have access to a film club, which is well attended.

All parents and carers feel that their children are well taught. Inspection evidence supports the views of parents and carers.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of pupils are well behaved in lessons and in and around school. They demonstrate positive attitudes which make a good contribution to their learning and the climate for learning within school. Pupils manage their own behaviour in most lessons, resulting in good opportunities to collaborate responsibly with other pupils. Pupils play well together and are considerate and well mannered, indicating that the standards of behaviour seen during the inspection are those normally seen over time. There have been no exclusions for several years and school records show that instances of poor behaviour and of bullying are extremely rare. Attendance has improved through a concerted focus and is above average. The vast majority of pupils are punctual to school.

Pupils are clear that they feel safe in school and know that their teachers and other adults in school will help them should any problems arise. One pupil said typically, 'The adults are always there for us.' Pupils are clear that any instances of poor behaviour are quickly dealt with and that bullying is extremely rare. They demonstrate a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including how to stay safe on a computer and consider that there is no bullying of any kind in the school. Through the questionnaire responses, all pupils and their parents and carers

feel that the school keeps them safe. The very large majority of both pupils and parents and carers are clear that behaviour is good in school and in lessons and that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders are effective in ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential. There has been a rigorous focus on pupil absence, which has resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' levels of attendance. There are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' performance. Effective professional development has improved the quality of teaching successfully and helped to raise achievement. For example, there are improved levels of challenge for more-able pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate and a concerted effort by all leaders has resulted in good improvement in key priorities, for example accelerating pupils' progress in English in Key Stage 2. The school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to sustain improvement. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, systems for using assessment information to measure children's progress in the Nursery class are not sharp enough.

The school is highly inclusive and promotes equality of opportunities well with all groups of pupils, including those who are more able and those who are profoundly deaf, making good progress from their different starting points.

The governing body is committed to the improvement of the school and has a good knowledge and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are involved fully in holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance. They rigorously ensure that pupils and staff are safe through safeguarding arrangements that meet requirements fully. The school works well with parents and carers, who express very positive views about how the school responds to their concerns and keeps them informed. There are close links with the local church and the parent teacher association, both of which make a good contribution to the sustained development of the school.

The curriculum is effective, with a wide range of additional activities on offer. A more skills-based approach to the curriculum has been developed, with clear links between subjects, which gives pupils good opportunities to apply their basic skills in all their learning. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school celebrates its links with pupils who are profoundly deaf through the school signing choir, which is open to pupils from every age group in the school. There is very good take-up of the wide range of additional activities on offer, which contribute significantly to pupils' social and cultural development, for example the gardening club which has over a hundred members.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at schools and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knotty Ash Primary School, Liverpool, L14 5NX

Thank you for being so polite, welcoming and friendly when the inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time at Knotty Ash particularly that spent talking to you about your learning and the activities you like to do. We know that you enjoy being in school and like your teachers a lot.

Knotty Ash is a good school with many strengths. We were impressed by your good behaviour and attitudes to learning, which help to make the school a happy place to be and to learn. You told us that your teachers 'are always there for us' and that you feel safe. Bullying is rare and all pupils get on well with each other. Teaching is good and you told us that your teachers make your learning fun. You enjoy all the activities on offer, including the wide range of clubs that are provided. You make good progress in your learning to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6, including in reading. The school is well led by the headteacher and the governing body, and all staff do a good job in looking after you. You told us that 'Every time you turn a corner you see an adult.' Staff ensure that all pupils do as well as they can.

We are asking the school to improve your achievement in writing in all your subjects by making sure that activities enable you to use your writing targets in all your lessons to improve your work. We are asking the school to improve the way it uses the information it collects about children's progress in the Nursery class.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and doing your best to help the school improve further.

Yours sincerely

Brian Holmes
Lead inspector

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