

Lowerhouse Junior School

Liverpool Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB12 6LN

Inspection dates 31 January 2013–1 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. The standards pupils attain by the end of Year 6 are well below average, particularly in mathematics. Pupils make inadequate progress from their broadly average starting points.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate over time. Teaching does not help pupils to make the progress that they should, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers do not plan lessons that challenge pupils to learn more quickly. Tasks are often too easy. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Some teachers do not allow pupils enough time to find things out for themselves or practise what they have been taught. Teaching assistants are not always purposefully deployed.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders have failed to address the areas for improvement identified at the school's previous inspection. As a result, the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time is inadequate.
- The school's view of its own effectiveness, particularly the quality of teaching, is too generous. This is because procedures to check the quality of teaching are underdeveloped and senior leaders have not addressed weaknesses in teaching with enough rigour.
- Subject leaders do not have the skills they need to check and improve with confidence the quality of teaching. Opportunities to share good practice across the school are overlooked.
- The governing body does not know enough about pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching to be able to challenge the school's leaders and help to drive improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Parents are highly supportive of the school.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in the school.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous and polite to adults and each other.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. They visited one small group session and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body, a local authority representative, parents and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's survey of parents' opinions.
- A range of documents was looked at, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and the improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, records of the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mujahid Ali

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This junior school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to schools to support children in local authority care, those from services families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the majority speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- There have been changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable, especially in mathematics, by:
 - making sure that teachers allow sufficient time in lessons for pupils to practise new skills and to find things out for themselves
 - making sure that teachers always have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan lessons that are not too easy, so that all pupils are challenged
 - making sure that teaching assistants are deployed to support pupils' learning during all parts of the lesson
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills in mathematics to solve problems, including when they learn in other subjects
 - improving the quality of marking, particularly in mathematics, so that teachers' comments help pupils to understand exactly how to improve their work.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance by:
 - ensuring leaders know how to review and analyse information about pupils' progress and use it to check whether their actions are helping to improve pupils' achievement
 - making more regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning in order to strengthen the way that leaders evaluate the school's effectiveness
 - providing support to subject leaders so that they develop their skills and can confidently check the quality of teaching and make sure that good teaching practices are shared
 - developing the skills of the governing body especially in understanding how well pupils are doing, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and how to check that pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- When pupils join the school in Year 3, their skills in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. By the end of Year 6, their overall attainment is below average and well below average in mathematics. Even though there was an improvement in English results in 2012, pupils did not achieve as well as they should. This is because during their time in the school, pupils make inadequate progress.
- The progress that pupils make is uneven because the quality of teaching is too variable. This is especially the case in mathematics where pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve mathematical problems in mathematics lessons or in other subjects.
- Pupils are taught to read in small groups in all classes. Pupils who read to inspectors all said that they enjoyed reading. In 2012, although the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in reading increased to broadly average, the proportion attaining at the higher levels was well below the national proportion.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also inadequate. This group of pupils does not make enough progress from the start of Year 3 so that, by the time they leave, they do not achieve as well as similar pupils in other school.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding make inadequate progress. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2012 show that the average points score of those pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal compared favourably with similar pupils nationally in writing and the gap between them is narrowing. However, this is not the case in reading, and, in mathematics, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly lower and the gap is widening.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate over time because pupils have not made enough progress and this continues to be the case for pupils currently in the school. During this inspection, a small minority of good teaching was seen, but there was too much that required improvement or was inadequate.
- Teachers do not allow enough time for pupils to practise the skills they have learned or find things out for themselves. This restricts their ability to learn independently and slows their overall progress.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. In one mathematics lesson, all the pupils in the class completed the same worksheet which was too easy for most of the class and, as a result, very little new learning took place.
- Teachers give pupils too many photocopied worksheets in mathematics and in topic work. This means that pupils are not challenged enough and are not given enough meaningful opportunities to write, to practise their mathematical skills and to think for themselves.
- Teaching assistants often provide a good level of support to pupils when working with small groups. They ask questions which encourage pupils to think carefully, record pupils' progress and report back to teaching staff. However, some teaching assistants have to sit and wait for teachers to finish talking to the whole class and the opportunity for them to support pupils' learning in this part of the lesson is lost.
- The quality of teachers' marking is too variable. Although teachers provide positive comments and offer good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work in writing, the comments they make about pupils' work in mathematics do not always help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve it.
- In the better lessons, teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and include activities that encourage pupils to find things out for themselves.

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage it well. Relationships between pupils and adults in school are good and pupils respond quickly to instructions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well both around the school and in lessons, despite weak and uninspiring teaching. Pupils have a very good understanding of the 'traffic lights' behaviour system and are really eager to remain on 'green for good'.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong and they are keen to learn.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is broadly average and most pupils arrive at school on time.
- School councillors plan fund-raising activities to buy playground equipment and to support charities. They enjoy the responsibility for keeping their classrooms in good order so that they can win the coveted 'Tidy Classroom' award.
- Pupils are courteous and polite, providing a friendly welcome to visitors.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying, name-calling and physical abuse. They are able to describe the difference between bullying and falling out as friends. Pupils are confident that any bullying in school would be effectively dealt with by adults.
- Parents responding to questionnaires distributed by the school or online, and those who came into school to meet inspectors, were highly supportive of the school and felt that their children are happy, kept safe and behave well, and inspectors agree.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders have failed to address fully all of the areas for improvement identified during the previous two inspections. There has been some recent improvement in pupils' writing but pupils are still making inadequate progress in English overall. In addition, achievement in mathematics has been an area of concern for several years. This shows that the school does not have the ability to improve quickly enough.
- Leaders have an over-generous view of the quality of teaching. Their efforts to check the quality of teaching, such as by observing lessons or by reviewing the work in pupils' books are not rigorous enough. As a result, teaching which requires improvement or is inadequate has yet to be successfully addressed.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Leaders, including governors, have not focused sufficiently on linking the quality of teachers' work with their pay progression. Pay awards have been given to teachers despite pupils' inadequate achievement.
- The skills of the subject leaders have not been developed well enough to enable them to be confident to check the quality of teaching for themselves. Although there are examples of good teaching, opportunities to share these among staff are overlooked.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding are provided with one-to-one or small group teaching sessions. However, school leaders do not check the progress of this group of pupils carefully enough or evaluate the impact of their spending decisions.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs and abilities of the pupils. As a result, the school does not provide all pupils with equality of opportunity to succeed. Some improvements to the curriculum are underway. For example, additional support programmes for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have been recently introduced, however these are yet to make a noticeable impact.
- The school contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are

involved in the 'Building Bridges' project which helps them to develop their awareness of, and respect for, the views of people from different faiths and cultures. A range of after-school activities is provided that pupils very much enjoy and contribute well to their social development. Pupils' moral development is strong. They have a good understanding of the appropriate ways to behave. This shows in the good behaviour that they maintain in lessons.

- The school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding.
- The local authority has provided a high level of support for the school. This support has helped the school to improve the way in which they check pupils' progress. However, despite the level of support offered, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are inadequate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-intentioned but have not taken up training opportunities available to them to help them understand how to hold the school's leaders fully to account. They lack the skills to challenge school leaders and they do not know enough about how to review and interpret the information about pupils' progress. The Governors are unclear about the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for this extra support. Governors are provided with information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in the school, but do not effectively question leaders about the link between these aspects. Governors do not know why staff have progressed through pay scales when the quality of their teaching is not good enough.

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	119215
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405843

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Johnson
Headteacher	Dominic Conti
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2011
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