

Kings Meadow Primary School and Early Years Education Centre

Meadow Lane, Ainsdale, Southport, Merseyside , PR8 3RS

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make expected progress overall to reach standards that are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. There has been a decline in pupils' progress and attainment in recent years.
- Pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and number are not consistently practised in other subjects or securely in place from an early age so that pupils can use them to raise their standards in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. There is not enough teaching that is good or better to speed up pupils' progress or challenge the more able, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not make enough use of the outdoor area to help them develop their curiosity and excitement for learning.
- Leadership and management require improvement. School systems to track pupils' progress are not clear or straightforward enough to help staff identify any underachievement or accelerate pupils' progress.
- Not all leaders act upon the headteacher's clear direction for improvement.
- Governors' understanding about the quality of teaching in the different year groups and of pupils' achievement is at an early stage and they do not fully challenge the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement is rapidly improving, especially in Key Stage 2, and standards are rising.
- The quality of teaching is improving. Some teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, is good and outstanding, enabling pupils to make more rapid progress.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. They are unfailingly polite and welcoming and keen to celebrate their school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school life. They feel safe and know who to turn to if they are worried.
- Staff say that they are energised by the clear-sighted direction for improvement of the headteacher.
- Governors are more involved and knowledgeable about the school's effectiveness and relish opportunities to be more challenging.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons; two of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- An inspector listened to pupils reading from Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including subject leaders of mathematics, special educational needs leaders and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, two members of the governing body, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), 33 paper copies of the on-line questionnaire and conversations with parents. The questionnaires completed by 21 staff were also taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and reviewed various documents including the school's view of its effectiveness, tracking of pupils' progress, pupils' books and records of governing body meetings and the performance management of staff. Documents relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Specialist provision is provided for up to 10 pupils with speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.)
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school care for pupils aged 3–11 years and 'wrap-around' care for Nursery-age children.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2012.
- There is a children's centre on site which is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- The Nursery offers 'wrap-around' care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better in order to improve the attainment of all pupils so they achieve their potential and make at least good achievement, in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1 and for more-able pupils by:
 - making sure that pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and number are practised in other subjects and are securely in place from an early age so that pupils can use them to raise their standards in English and mathematics
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge, particularly of the National Curriculum levels of attainment, to challenge pupils to achieve the higher levels
 - making full use of adult support in classes to enable pupils of different abilities and needs to make good progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - making more use of the outdoor areas to help children develop their curiosity and excitement for learning
 - emphasising the teaching of early writing skills so that all children know how to write individual letters.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels respond effectively to the headteacher's clear and unequivocal actions to improve the school's effectiveness
 - ensuring that school systems to track pupils' progress are simple and straightforward so that staff can identify and act upon any underachievement and accelerate progress that is not good

- further improve governors' understanding about the quality of teaching in the different year groups and pupils' achievement so that they are able to hold senior leaders fully to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how well this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement from their individual starting points requires improvement. Pupils make expected progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. In some classes, pupils make better than expected progress, especially in Key Stage 2, because the quality of teaching is good or better.
- For the last two years, pupils' standards declined and were well-below average at the end of Year 2 in 2012. These pupils did not make expected progress. Effective tackling of weaknesses in teaching by leaders and governors and specific support for pupils at risk of underachieving have ensured that pupils in Year 2 this year have made expected progress. Their attainment has risen but is still below average.
- Standards for pupils in Key Stage 2 have been erratic and were below average last year. The single-mindedness of the headteacher and mostly good and better quality teaching for older pupils have helped their attainment to rise this year, particularly in mathematics and for the more able. As a result, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2, and Year 6 in particular, has improved and pupils' work and school data show that attainment in English and mathematics is now in-line with national averages for all groups of pupils.
- The achievement of disabled pupils, those with speech and language difficulties and those with special educational needs requires improvement. Speedy identification of what is required to improve outcomes for individual pupils, including those with speech and language needs, is supported by skilled adults who provide one-to-one and individual teaching. This support is variable, though, and at times support staff are underused in lessons.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make expected progress and their rates of progress in 2012 were better than for other pupils. This trend has continued and their standards of work are in line with similar groups nationally. There are no real gaps between their attainment and that for all other pupils. The school's work to promote equality of achievement is having an effect. This is now more evident in improved progress and attainment for all pupils.
- Pupils make good progress when teaching is of good or better quality. In Year 4, for example, pupils knew exactly what they had to do to reach Levels 4a, 4b or 4c in mathematics because it was clearly explained what that meant. In case any pupils needed reminding, they were given very specific cards containing level information that were individually designed for each pupil.
- Teachers' specific knowledge about National Curriculum levels is variable and leads to work that is not closely matched to each pupil's ability. Consequently, some pupils are not challenged to achieve the higher levels and some pupils are not sure what is required from them.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make expected progress from their typically expected starting points. Well-planned opportunities for children to learn outdoors ensure that they are stimulated and talkative as, for example, when they were building castles. However, there are missed opportunities to use the outdoor area to encourage children's speech and independence and to stimulate their enthusiasm for learning.
- Many children do not learn to form letters at an early enough stage and this hinders their writing development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, there is still a proportion which is not good enough, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching over time requires improvement and this is reflected in pupils making expected rather than good progress overall.
- There is not enough emphasis, particularly for younger pupils, on planning work that is accurate or of a high enough standard to match each pupil's ability.
- The headteacher recognised that teachers' subject knowledge, particularly of the National Curriculum levels of attainment, was variable and that teachers did not consistently challenge pupils to achieve the higher levels. Teachers' knowledge has deepened because of tailored

professional training but it is still not consistent enough to match activities closely enough to National Curriculum levels for all classes.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly and usually in some detail. This helps pupils to improve the standard of their work. Occasionally, gaps in pupils' learning are not picked up by teachers' marking and, in these cases, pupils do not make up lost ground quickly enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are carefully guided by their class teacher and teaching assistants to help support their learning. This enables them to make expected improvements in their learning. Their progress is not good because teaching assistants are underused at times such as when teaching assistants spend too long observing the teacher introduce the lesson.
- Children settle down quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes because they are well looked-after and because they are interested in making friendships and taking part in exciting activities that capture their imagination. This interest is not developed enough, especially outdoors, and opportunities are missed to further develop children's independence and thirst for knowledge.
- The headteacher and the governing body have identified strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and set about improving its overall quality. Professional training, individual coaching and challenge as well as support from the local authority have begun to transform the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 2. There are still inconsistencies but improvements are evident.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are eager, helpful and engaging. They are keen to help each other and the staff and are proud to do so. Their school and their community are important to them and they hold positions of responsibility with pride.
- Pupils participate with enthusiasm in the many sporting, environmental and cultural events in the school and the local area. Pupils enjoy after-school clubs, contributing to vibrant and colourful displays around school as well as tidying up their local area and spreading the word about keeping fit and eating healthily.
- Their good behaviour is evident around school when opening doors for each other and adults and when playing at break times. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to do well. They listen attentively in lessons and set to work with enthusiasm. This is less evident in a few lessons where too little is expected from them and they become restless.
- Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree. Much work has been done to make sure that pupils know about different forms of bullying as well as what to do about it. Pupils say that behaviour is very good at their school; a view which is echoed by their parents.
- Pupils are fair and consciously try to do what is right. They are keen to point out that pupils look after each other. Their good social and moral development reflects their sense of justice and fair play. They are a credit to their school and their families.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn to share and 'take turns' because this is emphasised by staff through individual attention. They enjoy their time in the setting and are eager to talk about what they are doing.
- Pupils' attendance is average and improving thanks to positive engagement with parents.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leadership is beginning to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, leadership is still judged to require improvement because the new approaches introduced by the headteacher have not had time to become firmly established or to have a sustained effect on improving the school's performance.
- Until recently, there have been too many complicated and ineffective systems to check pupils' progress. Staff found them confusing and so they were used inconsistently. The headteacher is

now involved in developing clear and straightforward systems to track pupils' progress and to set challenging targets.

- Pupils' achievement has begun to improve, especially in Key Stage 2, although it is slower in Key Stage 1. Pupils' basic writing skills and mental mathematics are not practised consistently in other subjects so opportunities are missed to solidly develop pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Leaders and the governing body have been uncompromising in their actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching and this has resulted in improvements overall and especially in Key Stage 2.
- Performance management arrangements are now rigorous and linked to teachers' pay. This has not always been the case. The headteacher has consulted with governors to set targets that will only be met if pupils are taught well and make good progress. There is a clear sense of accountability that is welcomed by staff.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of their school. They are aware of precisely what is required to improve pupils' achievement because the headteacher is rigorous in her analysis of pupils' performance and determined to improve it. Her vision and commitment are shared by staff who are buoyed up by well-worked-out strategies for improvement along with support and training to improve their contribution.
- The curriculum is sufficiently matched to pupils' abilities and interests to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least expected progress and have equal opportunities to develop their learning and personal qualities.
- Pupils appreciate the many activities after school as well as educational visits. They are proud of the high-quality displays around the school and in their classrooms.
- The local authority has provided useful and timely support to improve pupils' achievement. This is beginning to raise standards.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governance of the school requires improvement. Governors acknowledge that they have not been sufficiently challenging in the past and that their knowledge of the quality of teaching and of pupils' achievement was limited. In the last year, governors have undertaken training to enable them to question pupils' standards, evaluate the quality of teaching as well as to know how to tackle weaknesses. Their new knowledge and skills put them in a better position to hold the school to account, although these are at an early stage in terms of their development and impact. Governors are now involved in the performance management of staff. The governing body meets statutory requirements regarding the safeguarding of pupils and updates their training on a regular basis. The impact of pupil premium funding is thoroughly discussed. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are very involved in the life of the school. Finances are managed appropriately and are matched to school priorities.

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	104886
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	411761

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Bowen
Headteacher	Sandie Lineton
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2009
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