

Plantation Primary School

Hollies Road, Halewood, Liverpool, Merseyside, L26 0TH

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' progress varies across year groups and is not yet consistently good.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged enough to reach their full potential.
- In some lessons, opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in their learning are limited and pupils can spend too long listening to the teacher.
- Some teachers are not yet assessing pupils' progress during lessons to ensure that all pupils make good progress in each lesson.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently good across the school. Some marking does not provide opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments on how to improve their work and deepen their understanding.
- The school's new strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not yet being consistently applied in all lessons.
- Leaders and managers have yet to ensure that consistently good and better teaching is bringing about good progress across all year groups.
- Governors have not yet fully developed their skills in holding the school to account for its performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have clear and ambitious views of the school's priorities and what needs to be done to make significant and sustained improvements. As a result, some improvement can be seen in the quality of teaching and the more positive performance of those pupils currently attending the school.
- Because of improved tracking and monitoring systems, senior leaders, including governors, have a more accurate view of the school's performance.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 part lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out a number of shorter visits to classrooms to assess pupils' work and learning and also visited assemblies and provision the school has for pupils before and after school starts.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a local authority advisor.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, and they scrutinised the school's plans for improvement, as well as a range of policies and assessment information. They also looked at pupils' work in books during lessons.
- The views of 55 parents were considered through the online questionnaire (Parent View). The views of 55 members of staff expressed through a staff questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Gary Kelly, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Adrian Martin	Additional Inspector
Kevin Johnson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is well-below average. The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision to support its pupils.
- There have been significant changes to the school's leadership since the previous interim assessment. A new headteacher has been in post since January 2013, and there have been significant changes to the school's governance.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set 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 it is consistently good or better across all year groups and in all lessons in order to enhance pupils' performance by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are provided with activities that stretch them and enable them to reach their full potential in all lessons
 - allowing all pupils to become actively involved in their own learning by providing activities that allow pupils to work independently and in groups to solve problems
 - ensuring teachers assess pupils' progress throughout lessons so that work constantly meets the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring consistently high quality marking and feedback is provided so that pupils understand what needs to be done to improve their work and deepen their understanding.
- Improve senior and middle leadership, including governance, to ensure there is a clear focus on improving achievement by:
 - ensuring the school's approach to monitoring the improvement to the quality of teaching and learning has a greater emphasis on the link between classroom performance and paid progression
 - ensuring the school's approach to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is applied in all areas
 - further developing the skills of governors to enable them to ask searching questions when holding the school to account for pupils' achievement.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although the majority of pupils leave school in Year 6 having reached national expectations in test results, some groups of pupils are not achieving as well as they should across all year groups and in all subjects.
- The progress pupils make across year groups, and in different subjects, is still too variable and those who are most-able do not achieve as well as they should.
- The school's approach to embedding strategies to develop writing and mathematics skills are not yet consistently applied across the school and some pupils do less well because of this. However, the school has ensured that pupils' achievement in reading has been sustained. This is due to well-focused activities that take place each day, enabling pupils to be confident and enjoy reading, which has improved their learning in this area.
- The school's latest assessment information shows that all pupils currently attending the school, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making better progress. This is because of the more effective support they are receiving from teachers and teaching assistants in class. This is a reflection of the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. The improvements were noted in lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and hearing them read.
- The progress made by pupils supported by pupil premium funding is similar to that of other pupils in the school. Although the attainment of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than their peers nationally, it is lower than that of other pupils in the school. Although over time this gap is narrowing.
- Children enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities in communication, language and literacy which are below those typical for their age. They have a good start to their education in the school, and are effectively prepared for entry into Year 1.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good. Some weaker teaching means that not all pupils make good progress across the school.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. In some classes, marking in books gives insufficient guidance on how pupils should improve their work and the next steps in their learning and where this is the case, pupils are not always given opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback in books so they could improve their performance.
- Teachers generally use assessment information to plan lessons which enable pupils to learn at a pace which suits their ability levels, ensuring most pupils make good progress. However, in a small number of lessons, some pupils, particularly those who are most able, are not challenged enough to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers miss opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful or real-life contexts in a range of subjects.
- More effective tracking and monitoring procedures have recently been established and are beginning to be used well to support pupils who fall behind, particularly for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result, vulnerable pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium are making better progress.
- In good and better lessons, teachers and additional adults make good use of questioning to test and assess pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, they encourage pupils to model sentences and promote and use correct vocabulary. In these lessons, pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss and solve problems with their talk partner or in larger groups, and are more actively involved in their learning.
- When teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together, as in an outstanding Year 6

English lesson, pupils respond well and use technical language to explain their points of view and understanding. Pupils articulate clearly the progress they had made over previous lessons, and how, working as a team, they were learning together, testing each other's knowledge and providing support to each other.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils engage well with each other and adults. They are courteous and respectful. They are very inquisitive and are quick to engage in conversation with visitors. Their behaviour in classrooms and around the school generally is consistently good.
- Pupils enjoy the rewards given for their positive behaviour, for example, letters home, merit stickers, badges and house points. The school's strategies for ensuring good behaviour are applied consistently and there have been no permanent exclusions at the school for over three years.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong, and they consistently demonstrate a thirst for learning in lessons. This consistency is only rarely interrupted when lessons do not provide enough interest and challenge to keep them motivated.
- Pupils said that they believe behaviour in school is good overall and that the school keeps them safe. They have a good awareness of internet safety and how to stay safe in school and the wider community.
- All pupils get on well with each other and they say that bullying or racist and homophobic behaviour is very rare and is dealt with effectively by the school.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given. There is an active school council which recently appointed a head boy and girl. They meet regularly to discuss school issues and possible improvements, and played a key role in the appointment of the new headteacher.
- Attendance at the school has improved and is now in-line with the national average. This is because pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Almost all parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, agree that behaviour and safety at the school are good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because plans and policies to tackle under-performance are too recent to demonstrate the full impact on pupils' achievement. The recent improvements in teaching and strengthening of the governing body show that the school is in a strong position to continue to improve further.
- The school's strategy to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy skills has brought about some improvement. However, this strategy is not yet consistently applied across all subjects and so pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and use these skills widely enough.
- There has not been a clear link between progress up the salary scale and the performance of leaders, managers and teachers at all levels.
- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher are beginning to bring about improvement. Ambitious plans are being implemented and are shared with all staff, who have a collective sense of purpose to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further.
- The curriculum still needs improvement to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. However, the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in music, singing, art, sports and extra-curricular activities.
- The early impact of new leadership arrangements can be seen in the good and better teaching observed during this inspection and in current pupils' improved achievement. Leaders have taken decisive action to address weak teaching and under-performance, however, more needs to

be done to ensure consistently good teaching. There is a much sharper focus on accountability now.

- There are good professional development opportunities for leaders, teachers and additional adults to develop their skills and to improve the quality of their teaching.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, alongside governors, have been successful in creating a stable staff who share a commitment to bring about rapid improvements. Support from staff for these new leadership arrangements is strong and morale in the school is high.
- The school has recently established systems to check on pupils' progress and to identify and target those who are falling behind to ensure support is provided to close gaps in attainment. For example, the pupil premium funding is used increasingly effectively to close these gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and their peers in the school.
- The school has prepared for the allocation of the new Primary School Sport funding and has plans in place for physical education and sports activities to promote further pupils' healthy lifestyles and well-being. As an example, large numbers of pupils take swimming lessons, and the school uses sports coaches who offer a range of pre- and after-school clubs.
- There are strong transition arrangements in place with local secondary schools to prepare pupils for their next phase of education, including good links with special educational needs coordinators to ensure these pupils can settle down quickly when they start their new school in Year 7.
- Pupils value cultural diversity and have opportunities to visit different places of worship. The school knows its community well, links well with different schools and promotes community cohesion effectively.
- There are good links with parents. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, feel the school is being well led and managed.
- The local authority is now providing the school with support to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully committed to the continued improvement of the school and has recently improved the range of skills it has to aid this improvement. The level of support and challenge they provide is improving. However, further development is required so that governors have the skills and abilities to better hold the school and its leaders to account for performance. Governors' currently lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the link between pupils' performance and staff increases in salary. The governing body have worked with the school to ensure its financial health and have a good understanding of the use and impact of pupil premium funding. Governors ensure barriers to learning are removed for the most disadvantaged pupils. All statutory duties are met, including arrangements for safeguarding.

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	104441
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	426211

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	600
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Tubey
Headteacher	Ian Hardman
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2005
Telephone number	0151 4875678
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