

Kings Meadow Primary School and Early Years Education Centre

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

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Excellent leadership from the headteacher has transformed the school from one that requires improvement to a good school. Changes have been based on collaboration. As a result, staff feel valued and the school continues to improve.
- Governors have taken on board advice from a recent review. They now play an active part in leading the school and ask challenging questions. Alongside other leaders, they have ensured teaching and achievement have improved.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show the utmost respect for adults and each other. At play, they are energetic and enjoy time with their friends. Older ones play with the younger ones and nobody is left out.
- Pupils say they feel very safe. They recall the advice given to them so that they know how to avoid dangers and look after themselves.
- Teaching is effective and pupils enjoy learning. Activities vary from writing in silence to healthy debate among pupils about their feelings. This variety of methods enthuses pupils and they try hard.
- Achievement is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Year after year, attainment at the end of Year 6 has shown a steady improvement. Currently, pupils are working at above-average levels for their age. More pupils are reaching high levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision in the early years is effective and children make good progress.
- The curriculum is good and includes many exciting events for pupils. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is promoted successfully.
- Engaging pupils in activities such as the election for the country's favourite bird enhances their understanding of democracy and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's approach to teaching spelling is not followed consistently and pupils make errors in their writing.
- Occasionally, teaching does not sustain pupils' learning, including when learning letters and sounds. The marking policy is not embedded fully to ensure pupils know how to improve.
- Boys do not always progress as well as girls in the early years. At times there are too many activities outside, making it hard for staff to guide children.
- The strong leadership skills of the English and mathematics leaders are not developed in other subject leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw teaching in all classes. They observed pupils in the dining room, as they arrived for school and at play.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work with a focus on writing, mathematics and topic work in Years 1, 2 and 6. The learning journals from children in the early years were also reviewed.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents, including the school’s development plan, subject action plans, the checks made on pupils’ progress, the minutes of meetings held by the governing body and information about safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They spoke to parents when they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alastair Younger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average. This includes six pupils who are part of the school's unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties. These pupils are on the roll of this school and fully integrated into lessons.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is smaller than the national average. Very few are believed to speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been several new staff appointments since the previous inspection. Currently, the deputy headteacher is on maternity leave.
- During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were taking the national tests in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even further and increase the rate of pupils' progress by;
 - following more closely the school's guidance on teaching spelling and ensuring pupils learn from their errors
 - checking that pupils' time is always used purposefully, especially when learning their phonics (letters and sounds)
 - embedding the school's marking policy by making it clear to pupils how to improve
 - ensuring that in the early years boys always make as much progress as possible and that there are not too many activities for children when working outdoors.
- Extend the good practice of the leadership of English and mathematics to the leaders of other subjects so that they have an informed overview of the key priorities for their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- On her appointment, the headteacher conducted a thorough audit and drew up a detailed plan to move the school forward. Exemplary leadership by the headteacher has overcome many difficulties, including staffing changes. Due attention is given to making sure all staff are aware of the changes and the reasons behind them. As a result, staff and governors feel part of a team and the school is in a good place to sustain improvement.
- The evaluation of what is working well and aspects to improve is accurate. Next steps are identified and are transferred to the school's improvement plan. The headteacher is moving towards refining this plan with a reduction in actions now that so much has been accomplished.
- Priorities are based on the introduction of national changes as well as responding to aspects identified from the thorough assessment of pupils' achievement. For example, the focus on increasing the rate of progress of the most able pupils has led to the provision of additional support for these pupils. The result is an increase in the proportion of pupils in Year 6 working at Level 5 and the well-above average Level 6.
- The quality of teaching is monitored regularly by senior staff. External consultants provide support to verify judgements. Books are analysed and staff provided with evaluations of their performance and aspects to improve. Training is targeted at aspects that are identified as needing attention. For example, the teaching of phonics was seen not to be consistent and attainment not high enough. A change of approach has led to more consistency, although some aspects remain as needing more attention.
- The headteacher and governors take action when performance does not meet the current expectations. Staff are moved between classes to make more use of their skills, and support plans are put in place when needed. Teachers are set targets based on their performance and the progress of pupils in their class. Meetings between staff and the headteacher discuss progress and teachers are more prepared to explain any apparent lack of progress. Leaders carry out detailed checks on how well staff achieve their targets before making decisions about any salary rewards.
- A school priority is to distribute leadership roles. Progress to fulfilling this priority has been hampered by staff absences and changes. Leadership of English and mathematics has received more attention and is now effective. Action plans for these subjects are detailed and based on an analysis of data. Reading has been a priority and impact is evident in more enjoyment of reading, especially for the older pupils. The skills of these leaders are to be shared with other leaders. Although other leaders have supported staff successfully in implementing the new curriculum, their role in monitoring and analysing progress is not fully developed.
- The curriculum is good. The philosophy of the school revolves around community, enterprise and an appreciation of the wider world. Curriculum planning supports this philosophy. The school is involved in a nationally accredited scheme. Food for Life, which involves pupils in growing their own food in their allotment and using it in cookery lessons. Chickens are kept and eggs collected daily. Visits and visitors widen pupils' experience. The visit to London was described as a 'most memorable occasion'. The pending residential to try out some challenging outdoor activities is eagerly awaited by older pupils.
- The wide range of activities promote successfully pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about other faiths and this covers appreciating their differences. For example, Year 5 look at the birth rites of Muslims as they whisper a welcome to newborn babies. Pupils decided what they might whisper including, 'It is wonderful to have you.'
- The pupils are prepared fully for life in modern Britain. Debate is the norm in this school and pupils have spoken language workbooks that show a wide range of discussions. Older pupils study democracy and know what this means in today's society. They apply their understanding to changing the local community and the school's environment. The school carried out an election to select the country's favourite bird, enjoying the opportunity to express their opinions. The Year 4 focus on 'Go stripes for Tigers' shows an understanding of their role in saving animals under threat of extinction.
- Careful spending of the pupil premium has ensured support is effective. The funding of an additional teacher and teaching assistant has reduced the staff to pupil ratios, as well as increasing the number of extra sessions to help pupils when a need is identified. Governors make sure this funding also supports pupils' non-academic needs, so these pupils attend all visits and clubs. This supports the effective promotion of equality of opportunity. Staff foster very good relationships and ensure any discrimination is tackled.
- Effective use is made of the primary school physical education and sport funding. Specialist coaches introduce pupils to a wider range of activities. These sessions are organised very successfully, showing a good range of resources. Training has increased teachers' skills and an increased number of staff now led clubs. The curriculum includes a healthy living initiative and a high number of less-active pupils now

participate in sport.

- Safeguarding meets requirements. Policies are supported by effective practice, ensuring pupils feel safe. Many alterations have been made to the building to make it more fit for purpose. Classrooms and small rooms for additional group work are now very attractive. Additional changes are imminent.
- The local authority has provided most effective support. Advice from consultants, shared observation of teaching and analysis of data have ensured the school's changes are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Additional governors have added extra expertise to the governing body. Governors have taken on board the findings of a review of their performance. More attention is given to analysing data about the school's performance and pupils' progress. Governors ask challenging questions based on this analysis. For example, they know the most able pupils are now making better progress.
 - Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching. Some governors review books and carry out informal walks around school noting teaching, behaviour and display to extend their first-hand knowledge of what is happening in school. The headteacher consults with governors when concerns are identified. Governors know staff are made aware of the higher expectations of teaching now in place and, when needed, they involve the local authority to offer support and training. Governors review teachers' progress towards achieving their individual targets and check on their success before agreeing salary rewards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The exemplary way in which pupils behave plays a significant role in the happy and friendly ethos of the school. Pupils are friendly in a courteous and polite manner. They are eager to help visitors and enjoy sharing their happy experiences of school.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. Older pupils respond extremely well to the high expectations teachers have of them. They try hard to present their work well and there is always a good show of hands to answer questions and be involved. Pupils value the time for collaboration and there is often purposeful discussion and sharing of ideas. On the other hand, when asked to work in silence, Year 5 put their heads down and completed their tasks, showing a good level of success. This created a calm and orderly learning atmosphere.
- Playtimes are enjoyable because pupils have a range of activities to keep them busy. They enjoy time with their friends and organise games with simple rules that they all follow. It was a delight to see the older girls organising a singing game for younger pupils who were more than happy to join the circle. Other pupils are keen to take on the role of mediators if there is a falling out or somebody is upset.
- Most pupils attend regularly and overall attendance is broadly average. Some absences are linked to unavoidable absence due to ill health.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe. They report they can talk confidentially over any concerns with an adult. The excellent relationships in the school enhance the trust pupils have in the staff and their complete confidence that they will help them to overcome any worries.
- Pupils are fully informed about all of the different types of bullying and the dangers they might face as they grow up. They are adamant there is no bullying in their school. Pupils who talked to the inspectors identified that, at times, pupils might become angry or fall out but this is usually resolved between them. Pupils understand the dangers of cyber bullying. They recall the 'zip it, block it, flag it' prompts and try to follow these when using the internet.
- The curriculum includes activities that enable pupils to share their emotions, learn the importance of respect and to prepare themselves for the future. Visitors inform pupils about how to live healthy lifestyles.
- The pupils who met with the inspectors collaborated on the following quotation to describe their school: 'We think this is an amazing school because the resources are very good, we enjoy many visits and pupils are very friendly and follow the rules.'

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. A review of pupils' books, records of progress and pupils' and parents' opinions support this judgement.
- Relationships are very good and lead to learning not being disrupted by misbehaviour. It also means pupils are confident when trying out new ideas and not afraid to make mistakes. This is because they have confidence in the support they receive.
- Discussions and drama are regular features in lessons. Teachers organise debates that include how they can play a role in the local community. This was followed up with a letter to councillors about issues which concerned them. These activities contribute successfully to pupils' appreciation of fundamental British values.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare well for lessons. As a result questions are probing and pupils know they will be asked to supply details in their responses.
- Vibrant classrooms celebrate pupils' achievements and displays include prompts to support learning. These were used most effectively in Year 4 when pupils referred to the pictures to identify the properties of different shapes.
- Teachers use the information about pupils' progress to match tasks correctly to pupils' ability. Success is evident in the increase in pupils working at above-average levels because they are set challenging tasks that extend their learning.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils enjoy the time given to share a book as a class and this extends their appreciation of a range of authors. Teachers plan sessions for guided reading, which include a variety of activities with a focus on extending pupils' skills of understanding what they read. The teaching of phonics has improved although the impact on pupils' progress is not fully evident. Occasionally, time is not used purposefully when pupils are working without an adult, especially when they are completing worksheets.
- Mathematics is taught successfully. Resources are used effectively to clarify new learning and relate tasks to everyday activities. For example, in Year 1, pupils visit the class shop and record their purchasers as a small sum. Teachers focus strongly on the correct use of mathematical terminology. This was done very well in Year 4 with insistence that pupils recall the word 'adjacent' by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers encourage pupils to write imaginatively by the variety of topics used. Plenty of opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about different purposes of writing. Useful check lists enable pupils to identify what they need to include when writing instructions, letters and stories. The school has introduced a system to teach spelling but this is not fully embedded. At times, words are spelled incorrectly and not corrected to ensure pupils learn from their errors.
- Teaching of the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. Teaching assistants are clear about their roles and provide good advice and support. The pupils with speech and language difficulties are involved fully in lessons. Discreet sessions with the speech therapist and other adults include practical activities, games and discussions, which give these pupils confidence as well as extending their learning.
- The school has a policy on marking pupils' work. All teachers mark work regularly with some very effective marking that makes it clear to pupils how to improve. For example, in Year 6, the challenge is clear: 'How do you know this is a balanced argument?' This is not always the case and some comments lack enough precision to guide pupils' learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment has been gradually rising since the previous inspection. The trend is especially good in Key Stage 1 where the results of national tests have been well-below average in the past.
- Children start school with attainment that is below what is typical for their age in many aspects including their personal and social development and reading, writing and number skills. Progress is good from pupils' individual starting points.
- The results of the national phonics screening check in Year 1 were below average in 2014 and a review of teaching has adjusted the approach to teaching these skills. Attainment is a little higher this year but the changes are not fully embedded to ensure all pupils make as much progress as possible.
- Progress overall in Key Stage 1 is good and attainment has been rising albeit slowly over the last few years. In 2014, the results of national tests were broadly average with most notable improvement in writing. Work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress show this rise has continued. As pupils leave Year 2, attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics with an increase in the proportion of pupils working at above average levels.
- Good progress is sustained in Key Stage 2 and improved teaching has raised attainment to above average

in reading, writing and mathematics. There is significant improvement in the number of pupils reaching above-average standards in reading and writing. In mathematics, in response to challenging teaching, an above-average proportion of pupils are on track for the high Level 6. Pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling also show an improvement linked to the increase in pupils reaching above-average levels of attainment.

- Attainment in mathematics has been rising faster than other subjects because it has been a focus for the school over a longer period of time. Regular opportunities for pupils to learn their basic skills are now extended to applying them to solve puzzles, pose problems for others and apply their skills across other subjects.
- Many pupils now enjoy reading. Older pupils who read to the inspector had favourite authors and types of books. They read confidently with clear understanding and ability to predict how a story might end. In Year 2, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge of phonics and this hampers their understanding, but more are reading at the level expected for their age.
- Examples of work in pupils' books show that by the time they leave school many write imaginatively and use paragraphs effectively to structure their work. Stories are opened with dialogue and imaginative vocabulary enriches the text. Spelling is the weaker aspect throughout the school with some not recognising that some words do not follow set rules and have to be remembered.
- The most able pupils make good progress. Additional support for these pupils is enabling some to make very good progress as they tackle Level 6 work. They relish the challenge and are rightly proud of their achievements.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, similar to others in school, with examples of even more progress in some classes in response to effective support. Not enough pupils took the national tests in Year 6 to be able to compare their progress and attainment with others in school and nationally without identifying the pupils concerned. Nevertheless, information shows the pupil premium is used well to extend both their academic and social skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are fully met. The pupils who receive additional support for their speech and language difficulties also make good and often better progress in their communication skills. This is because they play a full part in school life as well as having individual and group sessions to advance their language skills.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start school with attainment that is below what is typical for their age. There is a change of cohort as children start Reception as some children from Nursery leave for other schools and newcomers enter Reception with no previous education. Overall progress is good. Many reach the level expected for their age when they start in Year 1. They reach higher than expected attainment in some aspects including their self-confidence, knowledge of the world, technology and creative skills. Overall they are ready for learning as they move to Year 1.
- Teaching is effective. Overall assessment information is used well to match work to ability. This enables the most able to be challenged and the disabled and those who have special educational needs to receive extra help. For example, in mathematics in Reception those needing support enjoyed clapping their numbers and then playing a card game that really extended their skills. One-to-one support was also most effective with a large picture of numerals and patient questions to increase counting skills. Other children were challenged to apply their skills of doubling numbers. The school's data show boys do not make as much progress as girls, and this continues to be the case, although adjustments have been made to try to ensure topics capture their interest.
- Children enjoy a wide variety of activities. In the Nursery, children produced some detailed pictures of fish after close inspection of real fish. Children enjoy trying their early writing skills. Outdoors has had a complete overhaul since the previous inspection and has a variety of imaginative resources. The water pump is enjoyed by many as they pump water into troughs and jugs. At times, there are too many activities and this makes it more difficult for staff to intervene and extend learning.
- The environment is organised well. Children follow set routines, select snacks and help to tidy up. Behaviour is good and children enjoy working with their friends. Children identify they feel safe and would talk to the staff if they were upset.
- Leadership is effective. Action plans show an accurate understanding of aspects to improve. Assessment is secure and the work collected in children's learning journals is used successfully to identify progress. Partnerships with parents are good. Home visits, open days and a sharing of information about topics ensure parents are involved in the early education of their children.

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	462308

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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Bowen
Headteacher	Sandie Lineton
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2013
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