

Mesne Lea Primary School

Walkden Road, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester M28 7FG

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The inclusive culture that leaders and governors have established characterises Mesne Lea Primary School, and is evident in all aspects of the school's life.
- Leaders are analytical, reflective and honest in their approach to understanding what the school does well and where it needs to improve. As a result their views of strengths and weaknesses are accurate.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are proud of their school and of their achievements, and are committed to doing their best because they know that this is what their teachers expect.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Mesne Lea. Pupils feel safe and know who to approach if they need help. They understand diversity and are not afraid to speak their mind in defence of difference.
- Leaders have taken swift action in response to the disappointing outcomes of the key stage 2 national tests in 2017, which were not typical of the school. As a result of changes to the way pupils' progress is monitored, outcomes are improving and most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are on track to make at least the progress they should in 2018.
- Leaders provide pupils with a curriculum that is both exciting and relevant to the world in which they are growing up. As a result, pupils are able to develop important skills in a range of ways, including through the use of information technology.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, especially in English and mathematics, because leaders enable them to share good practice and to continue developing professionally. Consequently pupils in all key stages benefit from good teaching.
- Recent actions taken by leaders have improved assessment practices in all subjects. However, the leaders of foundation subjects do not have the same detailed overview of standards and achievement as leaders of English and mathematics. Consequently their impact on outcomes for pupils is less well developed.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and most achieve a good level of development. However, leaders' analysis of the progress of groups is underdeveloped. They recognise that sometimes boys do not develop early writing skills as well as girls, and are taking steps to ensure that the quality of the curriculum outdoors is equal to that indoors.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of middle leaders on pupils' outcomes by ensuring that all subject leaders develop and implement effective plans to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their subjects.
- Improve outcomes for all children in the early years by:
 - ensuring that children have more opportunities to practise their literacy skills when they play outside
 - developing a deeper analysis of information about the progress of groups of children from their starting points, so that leaders are better able to hold teachers to account for the outcomes of all children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, with school leaders and governors, has established a strong ethos based on inclusion, tolerance and respect. The positive relationships that exist between leaders and staff are mirrored in those between pupils and their teachers and the result is a happy, productive working atmosphere at all times.
- Leaders and governors have high expectations for pupils of all abilities. They were understandably disappointed in the unusually low outcomes of the tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. However they have acted quickly, for example by making some changes to the way they use information about pupils' progress. Consequently current pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress and attainment is on the rise.
- Leaders and governors are honest and accurate in their views of what the school does well, and where it needs to improve. They make good use of a range of information about pupils' achievements, including for those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This helps them to plan the right actions, and to monitor closely the impact of those actions over time, especially in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have now introduced similar systems for assessing pupils' progress in other subjects as used in English and mathematics. This is beginning to provide teachers with useful information about how pupils are developing skills across a wider range of subjects. However, some subject leaders do not have a detailed enough overview of the achievement of particular groups of pupils and as a result their impact on standards is at an early stage of development.
- Leaders use a range of opportunities to provide staff with the training they need in order to improve teaching and learning. For example, they make sure that subject leaders and teachers visit other schools to share good practice, or to share information that improves the way they assess pupils' progress. Leaders provide opportunities for teachers to become involved in subject leadership.
- Teachers say that they value the opportunities that leaders provide for their continuing professional development. As well as attendance at training events, they welcome the opportunities they have to work with colleagues in school. For example, they talk about how much they have learned from looking at pupils' books with English and mathematics leaders. Teachers told inspectors that this keeps their knowledge 'new and fresh', and has a positive impact upon the way they teach.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that enables them to learn about different subjects in ways that capture their interest and make them want to learn more. For example, pupils typically write about their views of different types of music that they listen to. They use information and communication technology (ICT) to research information about the composers, and learn to use and understand words such as 'symphony', 'motif' and 'movement'.
- The curriculum enables pupils to practise their literacy and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. This helps them to develop a wider vocabulary, and to use

mathematics in everyday situations. As a result, their progress in English and mathematics is improving.

- Leaders make sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have created an ethos that is built upon values of equality, respect, tolerance and good behaviour. Even the youngest children accept and respect each other's needs and differences. Pupils state with confidence their disapproval of prejudiced behaviour. They understand the importance of listening to each other's views.

Governance of the school

- Governors hold leaders to account for the decisions they make. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities for improvement because they make sure that they ask leaders for the right information, for example about the progress that pupils make over time.
- Governors are justifiably proud of the school's inclusive character, and of the development of designated provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. They make sure that leaders are making good use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, and of the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium funding. They ask searching questions about how well pupils are doing compared with other groups. Where necessary, they task leaders with providing more detailed information so that their questions are answered fully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Governors, staff and volunteers have had appropriate, up-to-date training and know how to recognise signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation. There are detailed records of the checks that leaders carry out to make sure that new staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders know how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- There are well-established procedures in place for reporting concerns. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to share important information. Consequently pupils say that they feel safe in school, and their parents are overwhelmingly of the same view.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan lessons that are well organised and build upon what pupils already know and can do. They set very clear expectations for behaviour, and make sure that pupils understand the tasks that have been set for them. As a result, pupils settle quickly to learning and concentrate well.
- Teachers allow time in lessons for pupils to review what they have already learned, and to correct misunderstandings. Teachers identify and use opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding further. For example, in mathematics, they develop pupils' fluency – their confidence in using a range of mathematical skills – by asking them to consider

different ways of approaching similar problems.

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use this well to plan ahead for possible misconceptions and make sure that they provide opportunities to check the understanding of individual pupils. Support staff work effectively in lessons because teachers plan well for their deployment, and because they share the same expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers ask questions that challenge all pupils, including the most able, to think more deeply. For example, when considering the words to use when writing for different purposes, teachers ask pupils to think of words that will have greater impact on the reader. Pupils rise to the challenge and are proud when they succeed.
- Teachers provide prompt feedback to pupils in line with the school's agreed approach. Pupils understand how this works and are able to explain how the feedback helps them to learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's agreed approach and the school's website provides additional information for pupils and parents on what is expected and when. Homework is frequently focused on topics and pupils talk about what they have learned. Achievements are celebrated on the school's website. The majority of parents are of the view that the homework that teachers set for pupils is appropriate.
- Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in key stage 2 typically learn about life in the workhouses in Victorian times. They use what they have learned in English lessons to write imaginary diaries as though they are living in the workhouse. Work in pupils' topic books shows how they apply their mathematical skills to real-life tasks, for example to make vanilla milkshakes.
- Younger children have daily phonics lessons that help them to learn well about letters and sounds. They use these skills effectively to attempt to read unfamiliar words. Teachers plan lessons that maintain pupils' interest, so that they develop confidence with phonics in a range of ways. Work in books shows that this is helping them to apply their phonics skills to their writing.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work in lessons. They can explain what they are learning and they say that the work challenges them. Some pupils told inspectors that although some questions are 'very hard', they help them learn more about mathematics and make them 'think on the spot'.
- When they work collaboratively, pupils chat about the work they are doing and listen to each other's ideas. They stay focused on the task because teachers manage lessons very well and pupils know what is expected of them. As a result they make strong progress in lessons and this is evident in the work in their books.
- Teachers make very effective use of technology in lessons and across the curriculum, and identify clearly in pupils' books where this is happening. This helps leaders to assess how well pupils' learning is being supported through the use of ICT. Pupils typically use computers to carry out research, and video cameras to demonstrate to parents and governors the work they have done. In a recent project, they created their own music videos and encouraged members of the governing body to join in!
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in class and where

appropriate in the school's 'Cherry Tree' room. Leaders and staff work with a range of professionals so that plans for pupils' learning are tailored to their individual needs. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their various starting points.

- Parents say that teachers keep them well informed about how their children are doing in school. They know that leaders have an increased focus on pupils' progress as well as attainment because leaders have shared this. Parents say that they appreciate the pictures that the school posts on social media platforms because this tells them more about what their children have been learning.
- Pupils are clear that derogatory language in school is unacceptable. Teachers model respectful language to pupils and as a result pupils demonstrate the same respect for teachers and for each other.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders and governors have established a culture in school that places a high emphasis on the personal development and welfare of pupils. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to approach if they need help. The school's open culture means that pupils are learning to value themselves and one another as unique individuals.
- Pupils are encouraged to value their own success in sport and creativity as well as in academic subjects. They have opportunities to perform and to compete against other schools in a range of ways, for example in choral competitions with other schools. Participation as well as achievements are displayed prominently around the school.
- Strong leadership of the use of the PE and sports premium funding means that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are developing interests in sport outside school as well as during school time. Leaders have correctly identified that transport costs can be prohibitive and have addressed this through the purchase of a school minibus. As a result, no child is excluded from taking part on grounds of cost.
- Leaders have enabled pupils to understand the importance of tolerance and respect for individuals. Pupils express clearly and maturely their views on issues such as culture, belief, gender and disability. They speak their mind confidently against discrimination, and recognise the rights of individuals in society.
- Teachers provide opportunities in lessons to discuss and debate ideas and pupils therefore learn to listen to each other's views. They are not afraid to disagree with each other, but say that they recognise that individuals also have 'free will'.
- Pupils understand how teachers are preparing them for the next stage in their education. For example, pupils who serve on the school council told an inspector that the responsibilities they learn to take will help them prepare for secondary school.
- Pupils develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally through a range of experiences such as visits to museums, art galleries and places of worship. They take part in fundraising events for charities and learn about the impact that their actions can

have on the environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct throughout the day is exemplary. They move around the school in an orderly, calm and considerate way, managing their own behaviour well. Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes, and at breakfast and after-school clubs, is excellent.
- Pupils believe that behaviour at the school is good. They are confident that bullying is extremely rare, and that if it were to happen their teachers would sort it out and it would stop.
- Teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. They ensure that lessons move quickly and that time is not wasted by unnecessary routines. Teachers' effective planning means that pupils know what is expected of them and do not have to wait for long periods to be told what to do. Consequently, they stay focused on learning and develop good behaviour habits that prepare them very well for the next stage in their education.
- Attendance at school is consistently above national averages, and leaders have established effective systems for monitoring absence over time. One parent told an inspector, 'There is never a day when my child doesn't want to come to school.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection changes have been introduced nationally to the primary school curriculum and to national tests at the end of key stages 1 and 2. While attainment in key stage 1 at Mesne Lea has remained strong overall, standards at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2017, especially in reading. The progress that Year 6 pupils made from their starting points at the end of key stage 1 was well below average. This is not typical for the school. Progress in writing and in mathematics was average overall in 2017. However some groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those of middle and higher abilities, made weak progress in mathematics.
- Leaders have wasted no time in taking action. There is now a greater focus on the progress that pupils make from their starting points, as well as on their attainment. Leaders have reviewed standards with other schools so that they know their expectations are high enough. Leaders meet more frequently with teachers to obtain a detailed picture of how well particular groups of pupils are doing, such as the more able and those who are disadvantaged. They use this information to hold teachers to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and teachers have introduced a number of measures to improve pupils' vocabulary across the school so that they are better prepared to understand the meaning of texts. Extra mathematics sessions, along with a mathematics club, are providing pupils with a deeper understanding of reasoning and problem-solving.
- Information from teachers' assessments and from pupils' books shows that in almost all classes in all year groups in key stage 2, pupils are achieving well and are on track to make at least the progress expected of them in 2018 in reading, writing and

mathematics.

- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2017 achieved less well than other pupils nationally. The progress they made from similar starting points was weaker, especially in mathematics. The actions taken by leaders are having a positive impact on the larger, current cohort of disadvantaged pupils. Information from the school's assessments and in pupils' books shows that the majority of disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 6 classes are making at least the progress expected of them. Differences in school between this group and other pupils are diminishing. A greater proportion than in 2017 appear to be working at a higher standard.
- Pupils in Year 2 achieved better in 2017 than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The situation was similar in 2016. Disadvantaged pupils in both 2016 and 2017 made progress that was at least as good as that of other pupils nationally, especially at greater depth. The good progress that they had made in key stage 1 meant that they were well prepared for key stage 2. Any differences in achievement in the early years between boys and girls appear to diminish in key stage 1 and both genders exceed national averages.
- Current data shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2, including disadvantaged pupils, continue to make strong progress from their starting points at the end of the Reception year.
- The percentage of pupils reaching at least the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average for at least the last three years. Disadvantaged pupils have typically achieved similar standards to other pupils.
- Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate the wide range of books available in school for them to read. Younger pupils use their phonic skills well to tackle unfamiliar words and some are able to read challenging texts fluently. By the time they reach key stage 2 pupils know how to use the dictionary to help them understand new words, and they enjoy the challenging class texts that teachers provide. They read confidently and expect to read at home at least three times per week.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities all make sound progress against their individual targets from their wide-ranging starting points. Some make progress that is similar to that of other pupils and reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are very well supported in school and leaders hold teachers to account for their outcomes in meetings that focus on pupils' progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Information that leaders and teachers have gathered shows that in 2016 and 2017 slightly more than half of pupils started the Nursery class with skills lower than those expected for their age. As a result of strong support and good teaching, a high proportion of these children – more than the national average – leave the Reception class well prepared for Year 1. This represents strong overall progress from starting points.
- Disadvantaged children in the early years make progress that is at least as good as

their peers and sometimes better.

- Teachers make good use of the information they gather through assessments of children's skills when they start Nursery, or when they join the Reception classes from other nurseries. They make adjustments to activities and to the learning environment to reflect children's interests. However, leaders recognise that analysis of information from assessments is not systematic enough to give them a comprehensive picture of how well particular groups of children are doing over time. This limits the extent to which they are able to hold teachers to account for the outcomes of all children.
- Leaders acknowledge that girls outstrip boys in the extent to which they develop the necessary early literacy skills, especially writing. This means that fewer boys are prepared for Year 1. Leaders and teachers are determined to eliminate this variation and have taken a number of actions to address this, for example by developing activities that will appeal to boys and build on their interests. Information from assessments shows that this is having a positive impact. Differences from their starting points between boys and girls in the current cohort are diminishing and more boys are now on track to be well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers have created a learning environment that is well organised, attractive and stimulating. The simple rules and routines that they have established enable children to understand what is expected of them as they move around their classrooms and outdoor areas. Even the youngest children know how to find their favourite resources, or where to put their coat and belongings.
- Staff develop warm, trusting relationships with children and model attitudes of kindness, respect and tolerance. As a result, children learn how to share and play collaboratively or alongside each other, and to accept difference readily. Their behaviour towards each other and to their teachers is excellent.
- Teachers collect useful examples of children's work and record their observations of what children do and say. This helps them to make accurate assessments. Nonetheless teachers take advantage of local opportunities to test out or 'moderate' their assessment judgements with other schools. The early years leader is trained to moderate assessments in other schools on behalf of the local authority.
- The Nursery and Reception classrooms are rich in opportunities for children to read, write and count. Children's own attempts at writing are displayed prominently, alongside alphabets, numerals, labels and captions. Both boys and girls make good progress with the development of phonic skills as a result of teachers' strong subject knowledge.
- Children have regular access to the attractive outdoor space where some choose to spend more of their time. For example, a group of boys demonstrated competency at riding bikes, while others were supported to play a game involving throwing and counting. Leaders and teachers recognise that provision for children's literacy learning outdoors is not as well developed as it is for children who spend more time indoors. This limits opportunities for children who prefer to play outdoors to engage in activities that would develop their reading or writing skills.
- Leaders and teachers set aside time for parents to engage with their children's early learning by offering the chance to stay and play. Staff use the school's web pages and social media to keep parents and carers informed about what has been going on in the

early years.

- Children in the early years who have SEN and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. Leaders and teachers have established effective working relationships with external specialists such as speech therapists in order to ensure that there is continuity of support, and as a result children make good progress. Parents who responded to the Parent View free-text service supported this view.

School details

Unique reference number	105911
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10045911

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kate Cowpe
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Finlay
Telephone number	0161 790 4234
Website	www.mesnelea.salford.sch.uk
Email address	mesnelea.primaryschool@salford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2014

Information about this school

- Mesne Lea Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has established a provision for a small number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and the local authority has undertaken to designate and fund this provision from September 2018.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2017. These are the minimum attainment and progress expected of pupils by the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is greater than average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEN and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than average.

- The school has one full-time Nursery class.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, school staff and the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. Inspectors also spoke formally to groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a selection of pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the progress that current pupils make.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 49 responses from parents to the free-text service and 59 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pamela Potter	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Eccleston	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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