

Lister Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104554
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	324069
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Terence Bond

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Butler
Headteacher	Mr Simon King
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
School address	Green Lane Liverpool Merseyside L13 7DT
Telephone number	0151 228 4196
Fax number	0151 221 0838

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, which is larger than most junior schools, is situated in the north of Liverpool in an area of mixed housing. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds, with a proportion higher than the national average eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage although there are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above that found in most schools. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.

The headteacher, appointed in September 2007, was absent through illness for several months and returned to school at the beginning of this term September 2008. During his absence, the two assistant headteachers led and managed the school; this was agreed by the governing body and the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Lister Junior School is a satisfactory and improving school. It provides satisfactory value for money. Good relationships in the school result in pupils feeling valued by staff and each other. These positive attitudes contribute to pupils' good personal development and are illustrated by their good behaviour. Parents value the school's caring ethos and have confidence in the staff's ability to deal with any concerns they may have about their children's education and well-being.

There have been several recent initiatives designed to bring about improvements in achievement, for example in relation to the guidance pupils receive to help them improve their work, but as yet these have not had time to impact fully on pupils' standards and achievement. Standards by the end of Year 6 are at the levels expected. The provisional 2008 Key Stage 2 national test results for Year 6 pupils show an improvement on the previous year in English, but the underperformance in writing, especially by boys is still evident. This is something the school has highlighted through its monitoring and tracking procedures. As a result, the school has recently introduced a programme designed to improve writing skills. The number of pupils achieving the higher level in science has improved but there was a drop in those achieving at the higher level in mathematics. The higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of.

Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They know how to stay safe and appreciate all the school does to make them aware of this. They enjoy coming to school and are happy to talk about all the activities in which they participate, such as the after-school clubs and the residential visit. This evident enjoyment of school is reflected in the improved level of attendance, which is now above the national average. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to become involved in school and local community events. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the wider national and international community.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where learning is good or better, lessons are brisk, purposeful and pupils' work is matched carefully to the needs of all abilities, particularly so for the more able. However, in satisfactory lessons this is not always the case and the needs of the more able pupils are not always promoted well enough in class. This is particularly so in English and mathematics. Support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well provided by experienced teaching assistants. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used well during some parts of lessons and pupils enjoy using information and communication technology (ICT).

The curriculum includes an appropriate emphasis on developing English and mathematical skills but there are few opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. While the school's self-evaluation process includes assessment and tracking information, this is not yet used effectively to determine the most appropriate action aimed at raising standards and increasing achievement. The good quality pastoral care provided by the school is highly appreciated by parents. Pupils feel confident about the school's ability to deal with any concerns they may have.

The headteacher, supported by the two assistant headteachers, are committed to improving the school further, for example through involvement in a range of initiatives, such as the School Improvement Programme, managed by the local authority. The supportive governing body is developing confidence in acting as the school's 'critical friend'. The school demonstrates a

satisfactory capacity to improve, as shown in the recent improvements set in train to improve achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics, especially in boys writing and for the more able pupils.
- Provide more opportunities for extending the development of English and mathematics skills across the range of subjects.
- Make better use of assessment and tracking information to guide the school's action towards raising achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6. Since the last inspection, standards have remained fairly stable at the average level in mathematics but there has been some fluctuation in results in English and science. In 2007, the number of pupils achieving at the higher level in English was fewer than in mathematics and science. Boys' performance in English was not as good as in other subjects. The school highlighted this as part of its monitoring and tracking procedures, and a focus on reading across the school resulted in some improvements. Pupils' provisional 2008 results indicate an improvement at the expected level in English, mathematics and science. While standards are improving, the more able pupils do not always reach the standards they are capable of in English and mathematics. Boy's writing is also a weakness. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They proudly talk about how the school has received the Healthy Schools Award on three occasions. Pupils know how to stay safe and appreciate what the school does to make them aware of this. They say they enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the much improved attendance which is now above the national average. They talk enthusiastically about the range of physical activities in which they are able to take part and say they like using the playground equipment. This enables the good development of teamwork and collaborative skills. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in local community events and have links with the nearby church and residential home. Their spiritual, moral and social development are good, although their understanding of the global community and cultural awareness are less well developed. The systems for managing behaviour are clear and well understood by pupils. As a result, they enjoy the rewards for their efforts and behaviour in lessons and around school is good. The wide range of opportunities for the development of their ICT skills enables pupils to gain a high degree of confidence when using computers. This is a very positive aspect in their overall good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, although some teaching is good or better. Where this is the case, there is a good balance between teacher-led and independent activities, which fully engages the pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in a purposeful working environment. A good example of this was seen in a physical education lesson where the children were using hoola hoops as an individual and also a group activity to good effect. This enabled the development of good teamwork and collaborative skills.

Frequently, the pace of learning is not fast enough and work is not always matched to the different levels of ability, particularly for the more able pupils. On occasions, pupils are unclear about what they have to do in their independent activities and this can slow their progress.

Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used well to support the introductory part of the lesson. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by experienced teaching assistants. Teachers have begun to use informative marking to help pupils understand what they need to do in order to improve their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

While there is an appropriate emphasis throughout the school on developing English and mathematical skills, there are relatively few examples where this has been extended across the other subjects of the curriculum. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. The curriculum provides well for pupils to develop their personal and social skills. The high profile given to a wide range of enrichment activities, including visits, learning modern foreign languages and after-school clubs in music, drama and sport, adds much to pupils' enjoyment of learning. There are also opportunities for pupils to take part in a residential visit, which extends their experiences of outdoor pursuits. This is something the pupils particularly enjoy talking about. The contribution of specialist teachers through the Sportslink programme reinforces the school's aim to ensure that all the children have the opportunity to keep fit and stay healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides very good pastoral care for its pupils and parents understandably appreciate this. Several commented about their confidence in the school's ability to deal with any concerns they may have about their children's education and welfare. The school has successfully focused on improving attendance since the last inspection through a number of well thought out initiatives. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they need help. They also appreciate that they can use the 'worry box' and any concerns they may have will be quickly acted upon by the school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are thorough and rigorous.

Positive links with outside agencies help to ensure that appropriate advice and support are given to those pupils who require additional help. Recently, there have been some promising improvements in academic guidance through effective marking of pupils' work and target setting but it is as yet too early to judge their impact on raising standards and increasing achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is well supported by the two assistant headteachers, who play an important part in leading and managing the school. The school development plan identifies priorities and appropriate actions to be taken to help the school meet its challenging targets. Performance management reviews of the staff take place annually, although other opportunities for senior staff with subject responsibilities to observe lessons and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning have not been developed. Key subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility by checking teachers' planning and pupils' work but this does not focus strongly enough on evaluating the impact of initiatives introduced to improve pupils' progress. The school is aware of its responsibility for promoting community cohesion but this work is in the early stages of development. Governors fulfil their responsibilities and are kept well informed. They are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and are committed to improving the school further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Lister Junior School, Liverpool, L13 7DT

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you for welcoming us to your school during the inspection. You were all very helpful and polite and we really enjoyed talking to you. While we think your school is satisfactory, we know there are some good things about it as well, such as:

- how well behaved you are in and around the school
- the way you enjoy school and your good attitudes to your work
- how well all the staff really care for you, making sure that you feel safe
- how well the staff encourage you to be active and healthy.

To help your school be even better we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- ensure that all of you improve your standards in mathematics and English, especially those who find your learning easy, and especially help the boys to improve their writing
- give you the opportunity to use your English and mathematical skills in other subjects
- find good ways to measure the success of the things they introduce to help raise standards and improve achievement in school.

Finally, we want to remind you how lucky you are to have a headteacher and staff who are trying very hard to give you the best education they can, to help you get on in life.