

Plantation Primary School

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

Inspection dates 7–8 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other leaders including governors, provides excellent leadership and management. The skill and determination shown have led to significant improvements in both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Pupils achieve well and make good and, at times, rapid progress. Attainment is rising and is above average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Children in the early years quickly and happily settle into school routines and make rapid progress because the provision is outstanding.
- Good teaching successfully engages pupils and promotes good progress. Some teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes and attendance is above average. They say they feel safe at school and know who to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They hold leaders to account for continuous improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet result in pupils making outstanding progress.
- Occasionally, work is not set at the right level of difficulty for some pupils.
- Presentation of work and the quality of pupils' handwriting is not always good enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed group work and listened to pupils reading. They observed pupils as they arrived for school and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors carried out a review of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed including systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding arrangements, policies, a record of the school's lesson observations and pupils' work in their books.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered through informal discussions with individual pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Discussions were also held with representative groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Sixty five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered alongside the school's most recent questionnaire.
- The responses from staff questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Buckley	Additional Inspector
Andy Purcell	Additional Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a well-above-average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British Heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and therefore eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including the Bronze Award for their Eco work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that more pupils make outstanding progress by:
 - making sure work is well-matched to pupils' needs
 - making sure that pupils present their work well in all classes
 - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting to reflect the good quality of the content of pupils' writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has an accurate view of itself and school development planning is a model of excellent practice.
- Since the last inspection just a year ago, the outstanding leadership by the headteacher and other leaders has resulted in rising standards, so that pupil attainment and progress are above average, and in the quality of teaching being good. What has not been forgotten is the importance of having a culture within school where only the best behaviour by pupils is acceptable and pupils and staff feel highly valued.
- The leadership team and governors have the skills to not only sustain what has been achieved in only a short space of time but also to improve the school even further.
- The headteacher has provided the necessary training and support for middle leaders, making them highly effective in their monitoring of pupils' progress in the different subjects and in ensuring that all pupils are achieving well.
- The provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and for those supported with additional funding (pupil premium) is managed exceptionally well to the benefit of those pupils.
- The school tracks the progress of all pupils meticulously and if any pupils are falling behind, immediate help is given to ensure they catch up quickly. Therefore all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong. The management of staff performance has been a key factor in the improvements made to the quality of teaching throughout the school. Staff training makes sure that there is a relentless focus on improving standards.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and dealt with firmly if it occurs.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum with topics chosen carefully to capture pupils' imaginations. For example, topics to interest boys are carefully chosen for a special writing club for boys to help them improve their writing skills. A wide range of clubs and after-school activities, including hand bell ringing provide pupils with opportunities to experience different things beyond the basic curriculum.
- The partnership with parents is very good. The school website is very informative.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively, enabling more pupils to take part in sport and to help them benefit from a wider range of sports. An expert sports coach is working effectively with staff and pupils to develop skills in sports teaching.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Every opportunity is taken to teach pupils how to value and respect each other and this is reflected in their exemplary behaviour. The pupils have a strong sense of community and show pride in their school as well as pride in their wider community. The school works hard in helping pupils to develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The local authority provides light touch support because it sees the school as a good school but has provided valuable support since the previous inspection in helping the school to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have come on a long way since the previous inspection and are now outstanding in the way in which they carry out their duties in challenging and supporting the school. They hold special responsibilities, including links to curriculum subjects. They have an excellent understanding of the performance of the school including data. Their monitoring of the school is highly effective. They have a very good overview of the quality of teaching in the school. Governors make sure that the school's finances are used well. They ensure that the pupil premium and primary sports funds are used for the purposes intended. Governors ensure the systems to check on the performance of teachers are thorough. They receive information about the quality of teaching and seek assurance that any salary increases are linked to performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- On the few occasions when any pupil finds good behaviour difficult, excellent support is provided to ensure their behaviour improves quickly.
- Pupils are very polite and friendly and are willing to share their experiences about school. For example,

when asked what it felt like to be on Eco council one pupil commented, 'It's nice to be important but it's more important to be nice.'

- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They are invariably absorbed in work in lessons and this love of learning enables them to make at least good progress. Pupils and parents agree that behaviour is of a high standard.
- Behaviour around the school is of a very high standard; pupils say thank you when other pupils hold open a door for them and conduct themselves exceptionally well. On both a 'wet playtime day' and a day when pupils could go outside during the inspection at playtime and lunchtime, pupils' behaviour and attitudes were impeccable.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection, show that behaviour over time is outstanding. Isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with well.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include being house captains or being a member of the Eco group.
- Pupils persevere with tasks very well and are keen to help each other. They are proud of 'their' school and all it does.
- Attendance is above average demonstrating pupils' enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Record keeping and follow ups with parents about safety issues including minor bumps are effective.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and are very confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school.
- Safety within the school building is very good.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racist name calling or making fun of others for their choice of lifestyle. They report that bullying hardly ever happens but when it does it is sorted out quickly. They say that they feel safe at school. They are aware of the risks of using the internet and know how to keep themselves safe from harm.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils make good progress because improvements in teaching have led to consistently good teaching with examples of outstanding teaching in all parts of the school.
- Staff work well together and have good subject knowledge. They develop excellent relationships which help to foster pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
- Marking of work and feedback to pupils have improved notably since the last inspection. As a result pupils not only understand what to do to improve the quality of their work but take steps to do it. Staff recognise that more needs to be done to improve the way work is presented and also pupils' handwriting and this is a key focus in the school development plan.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They respond extremely well to their teacher's high expectations of them. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and say when they do not understand something. Teaching assistants are highly effective in their support of pupils.
- The approach to teaching literacy and mathematics is successful. Staff regularly listen to pupils read and so pupils become confident readers.
- Pupils benefit from clear and to the point teaching about grammar, punctuation and spelling so that by Year 6 they are competent writers and can apply their skills to writing in other subjects.
- Stimulating learning activities are closely matched to the ability of pupils because staff regularly check on their attainment and mostly tailor activities to individual needs. However, there are examples of work being set that, at times, are not well matched to pupils' needs, especially those of the less able, and where this occurs pupils' progress slows.
- An excellent work ethic is evident in every class. For example, pupils are keen to talk about the different points of views of Romans and Celts as part of a history topic comparing sources of evidence.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their starting points, the vast majority of pupils make good progress. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Younger pupils' learning about letters and sounds is very secure so that, by the end of Year 1, an above-

average number of pupils reached the standard expected for their age in the national screening for phonics (the sounds that letters make). By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are now above average. However, work is not always presented well and the quality of pupils' handwriting does not match the good quality of the content of their work.

- Progress continues to be good through Key Stage 2. The unpublished 2014 results for Year 6 are significantly higher than previous years, particularly at the higher levels. Robust tracking data held by the school shows that current pupils are making good progress and are on track to achieve well.
- Pupils have good reading skills and clearly enjoy reading widely. Reading skills are developed well across the school.
- The school ensures that all pupils achieve equally well. The most able pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils exceeding the national expected levels for their age is increasing rapidly. In mathematics they can apply their numeracy skills well in solving challenging mathematical problems. They produce writing of good quality when asked to write in subjects such as history and science.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are given good support, which enables them to make good and at times rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make the same good progress as their classmates. Teachers are very aware of their needs and track their progress carefully. The extra support they are given is highly effective and, as a result, they achieve as well as other pupils. The 2014 results show that there are no gaps between this group and other pupils in the school or other pupils nationally and this continues to be the case.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The setting is extremely calm and purposeful and the environment for learning is expertly organised to excite and motivate children to want to learn. Staff are extremely vigilant to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.
- Leadership and management in early years are outstanding. Leaders constantly strive and succeed in providing the very best start for the children that they can. All leaders have an excellent understanding of the early years curriculum and of the importance of meeting the precise needs of every child.
- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities which are mostly below those typical for their age. They make rapid progress so that by the start of Year 1 most children have reached good levels of development for their age and, as a result, are well placed to start work in Year 1. Children with disabilities and special educational needs and the most able make as much progress as other children.
- The teaching in early years is outstanding. Teachers and support staff know the children well through accurate assessments and provide children with exciting activities which help to develop their curiosity and imagination. For example, during the inspection, very young children, suitably dressed in wellingtons and waterproof clothing, were totally focused on using different types of sieves in the school's wonderfully muddy, but safe, shallow water pond. They are confident in their learning and know what they want to do. A small group of children were observed sounding out key words confidently and another group developing their skills of prediction in a well-planned counting exercise. Regular opportunities are provided for children to make their own decisions about what they want to learn.
- Children have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding. They listen well and concentrate for long periods of time. They show excellent developing skills in early reading, writing and number.
- Although still very early in the school term, children have developed excellent relationships with each other and the adults supporting them. They are confident with the daily routines and are keen to learn key skills such as how to get changed for physical education lessons without adult help. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Excellent partnerships with parents have been developed including keeping parents informed by using information technology and by well attended 'stay and play' sessions. Parents are given lots of information about their children's progress.

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	451550

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	606
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Tubey
Headteacher	Ian Hardman
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2013
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