

Knowsley Village School

Sugar Lane, Knowsley, Prescot, L34 0ER

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school. Select

- Pupils are keen to learn and attainment is rising. An increasing number are working at above average Level 5 in English and mathematics. They make good progress in a range of subjects throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have high expectations and they plan lessons that are matched closely to the needs of all pupils. Most teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Staff and pupils share a strong belief in the values of their school. They are proud to be part of it.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and are nurtured well.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Since her appointment a little over two years ago, she has worked successfully with other leaders and governors to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Governors know their school well, including the quality of teaching and the extent of pupils' achievement. They hold leaders to account for making sure that any relative weaknesses in the school's performance are successfully addressed.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, and makes sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure all pupils' progress is rapid and sustained across all year groups.
- When marking pupils' books, teachers do not always give them clear enough next steps in learning, or enough opportunities to respond.
- The information gleaned from systems to track pupils' progress and the quality of teaching is not yet used carefully enough to provide clear priorities for improvement and sharply focused action plans.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 12 lessons taught by eight teachers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of staff, pupils, members of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They examined the school's improvement plans, self evaluation, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety logs, school policies, pupil assessment data and a wide range of pupils' work.
- The inspectors took account of 23 responses to the online Parent View survey and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors also examined questionnaire responses from 23 members of staff.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Knowsley Village Primary School is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of a Nursery class and a Reception class.
- Pupils are predominantly taught in single-age classes, other than the pupils in Years 4 and 5 who are taught as one class.
- There have been many staff changes since the last inspection, including the headteacher who took up post in September 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that:
 - marking in pupils' books is refined so that it always includes precise guidance for pupils about how to improve
 - best practice is shared so that pupils are always given opportunities to act on comments in marked work
 - pupils in all year groups are provided with opportunities to write for realistic purposes across all areas of the curriculum.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that the analysis and evaluation of relevant information provides a clear picture of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching, leading to sharply focused action planning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in either Nursery or Reception classes with levels of skills and knowledge which, for many of them, are below those typically expected for their age. They make a very good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress through the school, reaching standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 which are now above average. This represents good achievement.
- In the past two years, pupils' overall levels of attainment have risen at a faster rate than found nationally and provisional results for the Year 6 national tests in 2013 indicate that this trend has continued. The increased proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 also shows that the school has succeeded in raising the standards of achievement of its most-able pupils.
- Pupils, including those who have found reading difficult, read fluently and accurately and talk readily about the range of books they have enjoyed reading. They gain a good grasp at an early stage of phonics (the links between sounds and letters) and apply these skills to their reading. Although writing outcomes are improving over time and pupils have an improving grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar, there are limited opportunities for pupils to write for meaningful purposes across the curriculum. This results in progress in writing being slower than in reading or mathematics.
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to practise techniques such as calculation and problem solving. As a result, they become increasingly confident in applying mathematical techniques and this is reinforced by many opportunities to discuss their mathematical thinking with other pupils and adults.
- The skills pupils gain and the levels of attainment they reach ensure that they are well prepared for secondary education.
- The standards reached in reading and mathematics in the 2012 national tests by those pupils who were known to be eligible for the pupil premium were in line with other pupils in school. This was not the case in writing, where those pupils' attainment was about two terms behind that of other pupils. School information for the past year indicates that good progress has been made by these pupils in both English and mathematics and that attainment is now broadly similar for all pupils. This demonstrates how well the school is using the additional pupil-premium funding to narrow the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and that of other pupils, and thus in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress because teachers plan tasks for them which are well adapted to their needs, and because teaching assistants ensure that these pupils are fully included in classroom activities wherever possible.
- Pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in a range of subjects, including geography and science. Although the technical aspects of these subjects demonstrate good progress is made, extended writing in these areas is limited and pupils are not always able to apply the skills learned in literacy lessons across the wider curriculum.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn well because staff plan imaginative activities that help them to develop their skills. There is a good balance of activities that are led by staff and those that children select for themselves. This is exemplified by the excellent provision and range of resources available in the outdoor area, with different huts providing a range of different stimuli. This includes a laboratory where Nursery children are able to use a range of equipment to investigate minibeasts and other creatures.
- The quality of teaching in both English and mathematics is typically good. Most teachers use imaginative methods that capture pupils' interests and pupils enjoy their lessons and behave

well. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils were using a range of resources, including ICT, to research for a book review and to write a biography of the author. However, scrutiny of pupils' books across the school shows that there are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to write for realistic purposes in different subjects.

- Teachers use assessment information carefully to plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs. Lessons build on previous learning so that pupils develop their skills step-by-step. This also ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well provided for and progress at similar rates to other pupils.
- A strong feature of teaching seen during the inspection was the way in which teachers observed pupils during lessons and adjusted their lessons accordingly. This meant that those who struggled could receive additional support while those who understood could be moved on more quickly.
- Teaching promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, displays around the school which stimulate interest and inspire pupils to learn also show pupils how different aspects of the curriculum are linked together. All classrooms have learning displays that support the development of key vocabulary and numeracy skills.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and assessments are accurate. While the majority of work is corrected, often giving pupils praise and a comment, the advice given is not always precise enough to show pupils the next steps in their learning. Additionally, pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to respond to their teachers' written comments. This is a key reason why the impact of teaching on pupil achievement is not yet outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is always good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils have a great pride in their school and a strong desire to learn, which contributes greatly to their good achievement as they get involved quickly in their learning activities. Behaviour on the playground is equally good, with older pupils helping to organise games for younger ones, using the range of playground equipment available.
- School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis although it is not yet exemplary because a few pupils in some classes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, particularly on the rare occasions when teaching is less effective and learning slows. All pupils respond well to the school's value system and the 'Achievement Assemblies'.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers have great confidence in the care that the school provides and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, or spoke to inspectors, judged behaviour to be very good and their children to be safe in school.
- Discussions with pupils showed that they understand about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They said that although playground squabbles may arise, there is no bullying in school and that, if it were to occur, staff would deal with it immediately.
- The school has close relationships with outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Attendance is broadly average, although has improved to above average so far this school year.
- The strong commitment to the safeguarding of pupils means that they and their parents are totally sure that pupils are well looked after. Pupils look out for each other around school and are aware of how to protect themselves from harm.

The leadership and management are good

- The very effective headteacher has made a concerted effort to build and develop a strong team and school community over the past two years. The success of this is shown in improvements in a range of areas, for example in the improved physical environment, in the number of pupils

who now attain at the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 and in the good impact training has had on the quality of teaching.

- Senior leaders show a drive and determination to improve standards further and to accelerate pupils' progress, and have a developing understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. While some leaders are developing their expertise in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' performance, there is insufficient emphasis on the analysis and evaluation of information collected and the ways in which this information is then used to form action plans. However, this does not diminish the school's capacity for further improvement.
- All teachers have performance objectives that link to pupils' achievements. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is regular and well planned. Although, it does not just depend on observations of teaching, there is not a clear enough view on how all the available information and data fit together to indicate where the priorities for improvement lie.
- The school is developing its curriculum so that it is more creative. Pupils participate in very varied and well resourced sporting activities that foster their health, wellbeing and social skills. The new funding for sport is being used fittingly. For example, a sports coach works across all year groups alongside the teachers to develop skills of both teachers and pupils.
- Partnership with parents is strong. The school has many formal and informal channels of communication with parents that enable them to be fully involved in their children's education and school life generally. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed overwhelmingly that they would recommend the school to others.
- As the local authority judges the school to be doing well, it has provided only light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are enthusiastic and ambitious for the school. New appointments have added strength to the governing body and, led by an effective and knowledgeable Chair of the Governing Body, they have a broad picture of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They provide good support for the school and understand what needs to be done to improve further. This support is balanced with a degree of challenge, resulting in pupils' achievements being discussed at meetings of the full governing body and at some of its committees. Governors have a broad knowledge of how pupil premium funding is spent and how it impacts on pupils' achievements. They have an understanding of the systems that are in place to check the performance of teachers against the national standards and, from this year, their related salary progression. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements and are effective and that school policies are reviewed on a regular basis.

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	104423
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	429202

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Foulkes
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Barlow
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2009
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