

# Mab's Cross Primary School

Standishgate, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 1XL

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and requires improvement. This is because tasks are not always matched closely to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Pupils' progress across the school varies between classes. This means that pupils' overall achievement requires improvement, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- There are inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) which slows pupils' progress.
- Marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Checks by leaders at all levels on how teachers are using information about pupils' progress to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils are not yet rigorous enough.
- The skills of subject leaders to check on pupils' learning are not yet sufficiently well developed.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear vision and knows what areas of the school need further improvement.
- The focused support now provided for specific groups of pupils shows that they are making progress which is at least and often better than that expected.
- Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good.
- Behaviour is good. There is a culture of kindness and respect across the school. Pupils say that they feel safe, and parents agree with this.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through a good range of extra-curricular activities.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or part lessons, including two joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups read and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), questionnaires completed by staff and outcomes from the school's consultations with parents.

## Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Neil Dixon	Additional Inspector
Kirsty Haw	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Mab's Cross Primary is larger than the average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at the school action stage is above average. Those with statements of special educational needs and those at the school action plus stage, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has close links with a special school and pupils from this attend on a part or full-time basis.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2011. More recently there have been have been some changes in teaching staff and additions to the leadership and management structure.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching in order to raise attainment and improve the progress of all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
  - making sure that in all lessons, tasks are always matched closely to pupils' needs and abilities
  - improving the quality of marking so that it always give pupils precise guidance on how to improve
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to improve their problem solving skills in mathematics
  - improving the consistency in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Improve the quality of leadership, including governance by:
  - rigorously checking how effectively teachers are using the tracking of pupils' progress to inform planning so it meets the needs of all pupils
  - developing the skills of subject leaders in checking pupils' learning within their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The skills of children when they start school are generally below those typical for their age. Children settle well and there is a good mix of activities led by an adult and those chosen by children. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their reading and social skills. Consequently, they begin Year 1 with skills that are generally expected for their age.
- Pupils in Year 2 in 2012 reached standards, which were above those expected nationally. This showed an improvement, particularly in pupils who attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics. Progress across Key Stage 1 is good overall, though there are some inconsistencies between classes.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils reach standards, which are in line with those expected nationally. School data shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are working at standards, which are above those expected in reading and mathematics.
- The amount of progress pupils make is variable, particularly across Key Stage 2, and this is why achievement is not yet good. Too few pupils exceed the expected rate of progress. This is because of some weaknesses in the quality of teaching where tasks and activities are not always accurately matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils have some opportunities to develop their writing in different subjects but there are too few chances for them to apply and use skills in mathematics and across the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy reading and the more recent introduction of regular sessions where they are taught about letters and the sounds they make, is showing an improvement in pupils' understanding. However, this is not yet consistently taught well or matched sufficiently well to their different needs. Furthermore, pupils do not always make good progress when reading in groups with an adult.
- The attainment of pupils who receive pupil premium funding is generally in line with that expected for their age and usually in line with that of pupils who are not eligible. They make progress, which is at least in line with that of pupils who are not eligible, because of the support they receive in English and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are also used well to support pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. They are now provided with targeted support, observations and more recent data shows that these pupils are making at least expected and often better than expected progress from their starting points. This shows a commitment to ensuring all pupils have equality of opportunity and that any discrimination is tackled.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching varies across the school and requires improvement because it is not consistently good or better and therefore not yet good enough to promote consistently good progress.
- In lessons that require improvement the pace is not brisk enough and teachers do not match activities well enough to pupils different needs and abilities so that they are not sufficiently well challenged. For example, in mathematics, pupils often complete work using numbers and calculations which do not fully challenge them or spend too much time cutting out and sticking in worksheets which does not contribute to their learning. They also have little opportunity to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- In good lessons activities sustain pupils' imagination and they have opportunity to use their skills and knowledge well. For example, a group of Year 1 pupils confidently and independently used a computer programme to create a map of information. This followed a review of their previous learning where pupils' showed very good understanding of food types and nutrition.

- Other features of good lessons included opportunities for pupils to be able to explain their understanding and to work collaboratively to do so, building successfully on their knowledge. One example of this was in a Key Stage 2 science lesson where pupils enthusiastically discussed in groups how they were going to test the strengths of different magnets.
- Although inspectors saw some good examples of marking, which told pupils how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve, this was not consistent in all classes or subjects. The best marking is seen in English, particularly in writing, where teachers usually give pointers for improvement.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support both in classrooms and with individuals and small groups. On one occasion, a pupil with special educational needs was very actively engaged in number recognition work showing determination and delight when something was right. This was because the support received was well managed; reinforcing and repeating learning so the pupil's confidence grew.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

**are good**

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around school is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate to each other, adults and visitors.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are eager to learn. This is shown by their attendance which is above average and their good behaviour both in lessons and around school. Pupils say that behaviour is good and parents agree that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved and feel safe.
- Teachers and support staff manage behaviour well because they understand and follow the school systems for rewards and sanctions. However, when teaching is not good some pupils do not always pay attention to the teacher and their interest wanes.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe, including how to keep safe when using new technologies. This was reinforced during a Key Stage 2 assembly. Pupils are confident that on the rare occasions that bullying takes place adults deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of responsibilities, such as being a prefect, helping with younger children or being a member of the Eco Team. Observation of playtimes showed older pupils effectively supporting play with younger pupils.

### **The leadership and management**

**requires improvement**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision of how they want to move the school forward and are focused on the correct priorities. However, their evaluation of how well the school is doing is overgenerous as there is still some work to be done to improve teaching and achievement so that it is consistently good or better.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is detailed and is now being used more effectively to focus on improving teaching and pupils' achievement. There has been some success in the improved progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding, for example. However, the use of this information needs to be more rigorously checked to ensure that teachers are using it to plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The senior leadership team have a clear focus on improving teaching and raising standards. However, systems and the skills of subject leaders in checking on work in their areas of responsibility, are not yet fully developed.
- Arrangements to check and improve the performance of staff are linked to the Teachers' Standards and the current system ensures that teachers are held to account for pupils' progress.

These are taken into account by leaders when considering salary progression.

- The curriculum is providing pupils with a range of opportunities for learning, both within the school and beyond. This is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities, trips and residential visits, which contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority provides the school with good opportunities, through the local authority area consortium, to share and develop successful practice in both leadership and subject areas.
- Partnerships with other schools are effective and pupils benefit from, for example, teaching of French by secondary teachers and a joint residential to France with other primary school pupils. The school has close links with a special school, pupils being fully integrated for the time they spend at Mab's Cross.
- Partnerships with parents are good, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage where parents and children benefit from effective arrangements before starting school. The majority of parents feel that their child is taught well and make good progress and would recommend the school to other parents.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are highly supportive of the school and are well informed about the strengths and areas for development. They review data, questioning what the information shows. Governors are linked to different areas and priorities, though recognise that their checking of how well the school is doing could be improved. They have approved the use of pupil premium funding to provide additional teaching assistants for targeted support and for pupils to be able to attend residential visits. The governing body has a good understanding of performance management, they regularly review and decide upon teachers' pay progression and question how this supports improvements in the quality of teaching. Governors take up training opportunities to further improve their skills. They make sure that all statutory responsibilities including budgetary and safeguarding meet requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106405
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	403012

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	442
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Barber
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Andrea Poole
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 749200
<b>Fax number</b>	01942 749600
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@admin.mabscross.wigan.sch.uk

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