

Mab's Cross Primary

Standishgate, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 1XL

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- From low starting points, most children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils achieve well so that by the time they leave Year 6 they reach standards which are just above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall and some teaching is excellent.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in the way reading, writing and mathematics is taught.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are considerate and courteous towards each other and the adults around them.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are kept safe by staff who care for them.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and there is an effective programme to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has a clear view of how successful the school can be. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, school leaders, staff and a committed governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have quickly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are not yet outstanding because there are occasions when the most able pupils are not effectively challenged and do not learn as much as they could.
- Teachers do not always insist that pupils complete their corrections so that they can learn from their mistakes.
- School leaders do not always check quickly enough that their actions are having a consistently positive impact on raising standards or that the exemplary practice that exists at the school is adopted in all classes.
- The governing body does not challenge school leaders effectively enough because it relies too much on the information that they provide.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by teachers and they also observed sessions taken by teaching assistants. The headteacher joined an inspector during one of the observations.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime and playtime. They met formally with two groups of pupils and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders and managers and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to a small group of parents at the start of the school day. They also considered 42 staff questionnaires and pupil and parent questionnaires recently distributed by the school.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Douglas Scholes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is slightly above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A substantial building programme has recently been completed and four teachers have joined Mab's Cross since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and thereby pupils' progress by making sure that teachers always:
 - set tasks that challenge the most able pupils so that they make as much progress as possible
 - check that pupils complete their corrections so that they can learn from their mistakes
 - share even more of the good and outstanding practice that exists at the school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - checking even more quickly that actions taken are helping to raise standards consistently across the school
 - further increasing the level of challenge provided by the governing body.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Reception class with skills that are below those typically found. Children benefit from the range of activities that are well planned to appeal to children's interests and encourage them to want to explore and investigate everything around them. By the time they join Year 1 children are ready for the next stage in their learning and over half reach a good level of development.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have varied over the last three years. However, the most recent results are broadly in line with national levels. The 2013 national tests showed that, at the end of Year 6, attainment was slightly above average in reading, writing and mathematics and indications are that this will be maintained this year.
- The 2013, Year 6 test results confirmed overall good progress with an increasing number of pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and a higher proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in reading, and mathematics. Work in pupils' books and the school's own pupil progress information indicate that pupils will make even better progress this year.
- The teaching of phonics (which is the ability to match letters to the sounds they make) has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased year-on-year and is set to be above national levels this year. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that teachers encourage them to read regularly. Class novels are used to inspire creative learning experiences that help develop a range of skills. For example, reading a book led one class to designing and calculating the cost of building a theme park; they then produced an eye-catching display of their work.
- The school provides focused support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils learn well and make good progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall. There are Year 6 pupils expected to attain Level 6 in reading and mathematics in the 2014 national tests. Moreover, an increased proportion of pupils in Key Stage 1 have attained Level 3 this year in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because their needs are now quickly identified and effective support is put into place to help pupils meet their targets. However, there are times when the most able pupils in some classes across the school are not well challenged throughout the lesson and this prevents them from making as much progress as possible.
- In Year 6 in 2013, those pupils eligible for free school meals and supported through pupil premium funding attained standards approximately one term behind their classmates in reading and mathematics and two terms behind in writing. Additional teaching assistants have been employed and provide well-focused support for eligible pupils, and current school data show that any gaps between eligible pupils and others are successfully being reduced. This confirms the school's commitment to making sure that all pupils are given the same chances to succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is now good with some examples of excellent teaching and learning evident across the school. This is confirmed by lesson observations, work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Staff have engaged in a range of training opportunities, improved their subject knowledge and now plan exciting activities that have a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, 'Marvellous Maths Days' are now regular events and parents are invited into school to join in. During one of these special days, Year 6 worked with Year 1 to design pizzas. Together, pupils developed their mathematical skills and increased their understanding of how important mathematics is in everyday life.
- There has been a successful focus on making sure that pupils have ample opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers expect the same high

standards of writing in all of the work produced and this is helping to improve pupils' writing skills.

- Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and reflect on their learning. What is more, a good range of resources are provided to help pupils to learn. For example, prompts are displayed around the classroom and pupils are encouraged to choose their preferred option from the range of practical resources available. Older pupils readily help each other and access calculators and dictionaries when they feel that they need to and younger pupils spoke enthusiastically about the new mathematics equipment that, in their words, 'helps us to work things out.'
- Teachers provide a good level of praise and encouragement to motivate pupils. They carefully question pupils to assess their level of understanding and mark pupils' work regularly. Following marking, they often make suggestions or set challenges for pupils to help them improve their work. However, teachers do not always check that pupils have completed their corrections, particularly with regard to spelling and mathematics and this prevents pupils from learning from their mistakes as well as they could do.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants provide an excellent level of support to learners. They work very closely with class teachers to meet the needs of the pupils with whom they work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and teachers make learning 'fun and interesting'. The school environment is well maintained and attractive; high-quality displays and opportunities for pupils to celebrate their work are evident throughout school.
- Pupils show respect for each other, the adults around them and the environment. The eco-councillors lead the school's recycling efforts. They make presentations to younger pupils so that they are made aware of the importance of reusing materials from an early age.
- Year 6 pupils are very proud of their position as role models; they are easily identified by their different coloured jumpers and set an excellent example of how to behave to their younger friends.
- Pupils who wear yellow hats are available in the playground to make sure that everyone has someone to play with. There is a buddy bench that pupils can sit on if they need a friend. However, pupils say that the bench is redundant because 'we are all so friendly.'
- Pupils are generous and care about each other. They have been busy raising money to contribute toward a holiday for a child from the school who is facing major surgery.
- There are a few pupils in school who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour and there are times when other pupils get mildly distracted from their learning. However, the school has a range of effective strategies in place to support pupils well and learning is hardly ever disturbed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Most parents feel that behaviour is well managed at school and that their children are well cared for. Inspectors agree with this view.
- Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils who spoke to inspectors unanimously agreed that there was no bullying at Mab's Cross but if there were it would be effectively dealt with by adults.
- Attendance has improved this year and is above the national average. This reflects how much pupils enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and is clearly focused on continuing to improve standards. She is effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors. School leaders have worked hard to develop a team determined to provide the very best for

pupils.

- The school's improvement plan is appropriate and has helped school leaders to put actions into place to address the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. However, the effect of these actions has not always been checked quickly enough to ensure consistency of improvements across the school.
- Senior and middle leaders frequently check the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are supported by an effective training programme and are able to visit other schools to observe excellent practice. They are also provided with the opportunity to work together and benefit from a good level of peer coaching and support. However, the sharing of the excellent classroom practice which already exists to further improve the impact of teaching on learning is a little underdeveloped.
- The successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in the way they work and play together and look after each other.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. A range of experts visit the school, for example the 'bug lady' visited Reception classes and set the scene for some creative writing and wonderful art work that the children were really keen to get on with. The curriculum is further enriched by a range of after-school activities and trips that pupils like to talk about.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in sports to help them stay healthy and promote well-being. The primary school sports funding is used to pay for training so that staff are equipped to teach sports to a higher standard. It is also used to purchase specialist equipment so that pupils can access a wider range of sporting opportunities.
- The local authority has been helpful in brokering support for the school since the previous inspection, including support from a mathematics consultant. The school has benefited from this but now demonstrates the ability to improve further without external assistance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely supportive of the school. They know its strengths and priorities because they receive accurate, evaluative and comprehensive reports from school leaders. Governors are about to undertake a self-review to improve their skills further. For example, they recognise that they need to find things out for themselves more and not always rely on reports from school leaders to help them understand pupils' performance information. Governors check the progress of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium to confirm that the funding is spent effectively. They know about the quality of teaching and make sure that teachers' progression through the pay scale is linked to how effective they are in the classroom. They fulfil statutory duties including, making sure that pupils and staff are kept safe and that the budget is wisely spent. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and governors also ensure that the school rejects discrimination in all its forms.

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	106405
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	442354

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Barber
Headteacher	Andrea Poole
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2013
Telephone number	01942 749200
Fax number	01942 749600
Email address	enquiries@admin.mabscross.wigan.sch.uk

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