

Rice Lane Primary School

Brockenhurst Road, Walton, Liverpool L9 3BU

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her senior leaders have addressed the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools with determination and sensitivity. They have developed a shared vision for the combined school.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are determined to improve the quality of education at the school further.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes to the good and improving progress that almost all pupils make across a range of subjects.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and ask good-quality questions to probe pupils' understanding. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils behave well around school and in classrooms. Teachers and leaders deal swiftly with the very few incidents of misbehaviour.
- Governors are supportive of the school. They are aware of the school's priorities and they contribute well to its continual improvement.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to solve problems and to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of presentation in pupils' books are not consistently high.
- Children in the early years make good progress. An increasing proportion of children are ready for Year 1 by the time they finish their Reception Year.
- Leaders have used training opportunities within the school, and in partnership with other local schools, to improve the quality of teaching.
- Inconsistencies in teachers' expectations mean that a few do not always demand enough from some groups of pupils. This is particularly true for some middle-ability pupils who make less progress than others in the school.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is improving. However, the difference in their progress compared to that of other pupils nationally is still too great.
- Teachers occasionally do not give work that challenges all pupils, especially the most able. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher standards in English and mathematics are not high enough.
- Attendance rates have improved and are now above last year's national average. Leaders work effectively to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Subject and phase leaders have improved their skills of monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. They have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving in their subjects or phases.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further in order to secure stronger progress for pupils by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of disadvantaged and middle-ability pupils so that these groups make stronger progress across a range of subjects
 - ensuring that teaching challenges all groups of pupils, especially the most able, to attain higher standards, especially in English and mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reason and explain their mathematical thinking
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of how pupils present their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her senior leaders have tackled the amalgamation of the previous nursery and infant and junior schools with determination and sensitivity. They have developed a shared vision for the combined school and, through effective communication and leadership, have created a mutually supportive team.
- Leaders and governors have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders have identified the correct priorities. While leaders have tackled these priorities with determination, they recognise that disadvantaged and middle-attaining pupils could make even more progress to better match that of other pupils nationally. Leaders' own monitoring of teaching shows that teachers' expectations of pupils are inconsistent across the school and that a few teachers need to challenge pupils, especially the most able, further in order to attain higher standards. However, despite these relative shortcomings, leaders' decisive actions are making a difference to pupils' achievement. This is evident in the 2017 results for Year 6 pupils, which showed improved attainment in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders provide effective training for staff and they have developed and fostered collaborative teams. Staff value the support of their colleagues and, particularly, their phase leaders. For example, phase leaders take the opportunity to share knowledge of year-group expectations and the characteristics of effective teaching. Teachers also identify other training that will enhance their skills and help them to fulfil their career aspirations. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good and improving, as is pupils' overall progress.
- Performance management processes are effective in improving the quality of teaching in the school. Leaders agree targets with staff and link them to the priorities in the school's development plan. This, coupled with well-structured pupil progress meetings, has enabled leaders to better hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have developed a vision to build a curriculum which meets statutory requirements, while addressing pupils' life skills, through the elements of the RICELANE (respect, independence, creative, critical, enthusiastic, listen, achieve, nurture, engage) ethos. The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through their daily learning experiences. This contributes well to the progress that pupils make.
- Through class discussions, teachers promote British values effectively. Election procedures to decide which charity activity to undertake, for example, develop pupils' understanding of democracy well.
- Leaders of subjects such as history, geography, music and art have benefited from leadership training from the local authority to develop their monitoring roles. They have formulated clear plans of action based on the knowledge that they have about the teaching in their subjects. These leaders have introduced well-understood and consistent assessment systems. Consequently, they are well informed about pupils' attainment and progress in the subjects that they lead.

- Subject leaders of English and mathematics have a secure knowledge of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subject area, because they carry out regular checks. English and mathematics leaders have introduced strategies to improve teaching and learning, including developing teachers' questioning skills.
- Senior and middle leaders have also benefited from meetings with other local schools, through which teachers share strong and effective practice. Leaders then share the effective methods they have learned about to improve their own and colleagues' teaching. Recent checks show that the strategies to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, leaders recognise that some inconsistencies do remain in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to support pupils in school and beyond, for example by providing a breakfast club. Leaders monitor these interventions regularly, and a designated governor has oversight of them. The improving attainment of disadvantaged pupils shows the positive impact of leaders' actions. Nonetheless, the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged does not match that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary school physical education and sport premium to develop pupils' sports skills and their involvement in a wide variety of competitive sports. They employ a sports coach to model positive attitudes to sport and provide a variety of activities for all classes each week. Sports coaches also work closely with staff to develop their teaching skills and confidence. Pupils are justifiably proud of their success in competitions and speak with enthusiasm about their recent success in football.
- The school uses funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well. In particular, leaders made a strategic decision to fund two SEN hubs to support key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils. The SEN coordinators are experienced and well-trained leaders. They monitor the effectiveness of interventions through a range of processes, including gathering pupils' views and scrutinising their books. As a result, these leaders are able to measure the impact of the additional support pupils receive, which in turn is leading to stronger progress for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The local authority, at the request of the school, provided effective support to leaders to secure improvements in teaching.
- Leaders continue to use a range of strategies to ensure that attendance rates remain above the national average. They work effectively, sometimes involving other agencies, to reduce the proportion of persistent absenteeism.

Governance of the school

- The governing body, since the amalgamation, has recruited a team of governors with the skills and experience to hold school leaders to account for the performance of pupils. Governors recognise the value of continual development and have undertaken skills audits and training to improve their effectiveness further. Senior leaders and governors promote good relationships, especially through governors having responsibility for monitoring key areas of the school's work. As a result, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- Governors challenge and support leaders effectively to ensure that they make the improvements identified and agreed in the school development plan. They successfully use their curriculum committee as a vehicle for holding leaders accountable for pupils' achievements. Governors support their role by frequent visits to the school and meetings with leaders. This enables them to challenge the information that is provided by the headteacher and other leaders.
- Governors are aware of their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and have received appropriate training. They monitor closely the use of the additional funds for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They also monitor the funding for pupils who are disadvantaged. They check carefully that the use of this funding has a positive impact on pupils' attainment, but recognise that the impact on pupils' progress could be further improved.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established clear procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns, which staff understand. Staff and governors have received appropriate training for their roles and know the signs of abuse. They talk knowledgeably about radicalisation, for instance.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe because staff talk to them about this. The school works successfully with local agencies to ensure that they have identified and effectively supported vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders successfully engage with parents and carers to make sure that pupils are safe and supported in school.
- Leaders keep meticulous records relating to safeguarding, including the necessary recruitment checks on members of staff, and store them securely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching since the amalgamation. With the support of senior leaders, particularly phase leaders, teaching and pupils' achievement in mathematics and English have improved for most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils are gaining a greater understanding of calculation strategies, although the opportunities provided for them to reason and explain their mathematical thinking are limited. Teachers have raised their expectations of the content of pupils' writing to encourage them to improve. These actions have helped ensure that current pupils, with the exception of some middle-attaining pupils, across almost all year groups make good progress in a range of subjects.
- The teaching of reading is also effective. The vast majority of Year 1 pupils meet the expected standard in the phonics check. Year 2 pupils read well and have an accurate understanding of what they have read. Older pupils enjoy a wide range of books by a variety of authors. The proportion of pupils meeting age-related expectations by the end of key stage 2 is above the national average. School information shows that increasing proportions of pupils in each year group are making improved progress and working at age-related expectations.

- A strength of teaching at the school is the use of questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves or to clarify misconceptions. Pupils of all abilities recognise the importance of this strategy in helping them become independent and confident learners. Effective questioning by most teachers allows pupils to understand how well they are acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects. However, in some classes and in some subjects, questioning is not challenging enough and this results in slower progress for some pupils, especially the most able.
- Leaders have employed a number of learning support assistants across the school and they work effectively to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who have been identified for additional support. Teachers match the demands of work well to their assessments of these pupils' learning needs so that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils vary across the school. High expectations, particularly in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, are resulting in an increased proportion of pupils deepening their knowledge and understanding. However, some middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress that they could because they do not receive enough challenge from their teachers. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations about how pupils should present their work.
- Teachers expect pupils to behave well in lessons and they have effective strategies to deal with the very few occasions when there is misbehaviour. As a result, pupils are engaged in their lessons and they have positive attitudes to learning. However, a few pupils are over-reliant on the support provided by adults. Consequently, they demonstrate a lack of resilience when undertaking more challenging work.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Year 1 pupils applied their knowledge of mathematical shape when studying abstract art. Pupils in Year 6 applied their understanding of persuasive language to design posters during their study of Ancient Greece.
- Teachers use assessment well to ensure that pupils are learning. Teachers tackle any misconceptions that pupils may have quickly and effectively. Consequently, pupils are confident that they will get the support that they need to learn successfully.
- Teachers use their improving subject knowledge well to plan lessons that engage pupils' interest. In some subjects, such as science, art and geography, this results in high-quality pieces of detailed work. At times, the work that teachers set for the most able pupils does not enable them to deepen their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe. They recognise the many different strategies that leaders use to keep them safe, including lessons on, for example, road safety and how to stay safe on the internet.
- In conversation with inspectors and in response to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, parents, carers and pupils stated that bullying is rare and that leaders deal with it

swiftly and effectively when necessary.

- Pupils value the support and encouragement that they receive from their teachers. They are developing the self-confidence and independence to be successful learners. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the clarifications and reminders from staff about past learning and describe lessons as 'fun'. However, poor presentation by some pupils suggests a lack of pride in their work.
- Pupils benefit from a number of clubs that the staff provide and they appreciate the opportunity to play sports against other local schools with a significant degree of success. These activities, along with, for example, regular opportunities to support various charities and learn from visitors from different faiths, enhance and enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are a number of opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility in the school. These include becoming a member of the school council. Pupils elected to these roles carry out their duties with pride and to good effect. Pupils can also undertake sports councillor roles to promote sports and playground games for pupils of all ages.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is orderly. They play well together in the playground. The younger pupils particularly enjoy the games organised for them by older pupils who are elected as playground leaders. There are rare examples of misbehaviour, but staff are effective in dealing with these.
- Attendance of all groups of pupils has been rising and is now above last year's national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased over the past year as leaders have used a variety of strategies, including meetings with parents, to address the problem with determination.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Throughout the amalgamation, the results of national assessments have been below the national averages for pupils' progress at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and attainment at key stage 1. Leaders and governors took decisive action to improve pupils' outcomes, including the appointment of phase leaders to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils in 2017. Although the combined reading, writing and mathematics attainment remained below the national average, attainment in each of these separate subjects was above the respective national averages.
- Despite the school's historical achievement, current pupils' work in books and the school's own assessment information indicate that most pupils now in the school make good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This is because of the improvements in the quality of teaching. While current pupils are attaining well, leaders recognise that some pupils could make even better progress. However, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

- Work in pupils' mathematics books and school records show that most pupils make good progress in this subject. Pupils' knowledge and skills are improving and they are developing a deepening understanding of calculation processes. However, opportunities to draw on their increasing mathematical knowledge and understanding to explain their thought processes, to say how they came to their answers and to develop their reasoning skills are limited.
- Pupils' writing includes a variety of sentence structures and phrases to add interest. In most classes, teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils, particularly older pupils, are able to produce emotive and cohesive pieces of writing. A typical example from a description of a setting in Year 4 was: 'The wilderness was a paradise of death, where no man was bold nor brave enough to step foot into the land of doom.'
- Pupils read with appropriate fluency and comprehension for their age and ability. They use their knowledge of phonics effectively to read unfamiliar words. They read widely and for pleasure, and enjoy reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils make weaker progress when compared to other pupils nationally. Teachers are beginning to devise more appropriate support through their teaching plans. Leaders use reviews of achievement information each half term to determine the impact of this support on pupils' achievements.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Pupils benefit from carefully planned interventions, with well-sequenced lessons and support, which help them to make strong gains in their learning.
- The most able pupils currently in the school, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, make good progress as teachers are beginning to challenge them more and match activities better to their needs. However, as leaders recognise, there is more to do to ensure that this group of pupils receive the challenge they need to excel.
- Pupils acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects other than English and mathematics. The work in their books shows that most pupils make good progress. For example, in Year 1, a strong focus on geographical vocabulary enabled pupils to identify similarities and differences in features in Liverpool. In Year 4, a variety of written, oral and filmed versions of 'The Highwayman' enabled pupils to develop their understanding of the poem's themes.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age and stage of development. Through good teaching and a range of supportive interventions, a higher proportion of children than in previous years are making good progress. They are typically well prepared for Year 1, although the proportion reaching a good level of development remains below the national average.
- Leaders' assessment records and the work in children's books show that those children currently at the school are making good progress from their starting points.
- Developing children's language skills and responding to their personal, social and emotional needs are important characteristics of the provision for two-year-olds. Parents commented on how supportive leaders and staff are in meeting the needs of the youngest children. Children gain a broad experience, including developing skills in

the outdoor environment during specifically planned sessions, which supports their progress across different areas of learning.

- Nursery children benefit from adults' high expectations, especially in the teaching of vocabulary and phonics. Children are beginning to form recognisable letters and attempt to write their own names.
- Reception children listen carefully to instructions. Staff use effective questioning and a wide range of experiences to assess and broaden children's knowledge of, for example, sandwich fillings. Staff also intervene swiftly to address misconceptions, enabling children to develop their understanding further. Learning support assistants support children's learning activities well and help them to make good progress over time.
- The leader of the early years has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. She is keen to secure improvements and has identified, for example, that the development of speech and language and boys' progress is central to improved outcomes.
- Children who are disadvantaged make good progress. This is because staff provide a number of additional activities which effectively support their learning. These activities are particularly effective in language acquisition and speech and language development.
- Staff make sensitive use of the SEN hub to meet the specific needs of children with SEN and/or disabilities. This approach enables these children to make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders involve parents in their children's education in various ways. Parents add comments to their children's learning journeys and accept invitations to join their children in school activities. Staff meet with parents before children join the Nursery or Reception class to ascertain the child's needs and establish which agencies they may need to involve. This ensures that transition into the early years is well managed.
- Children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. They are confident in exploring activities indoors and outside, demonstrating that they feel safe. There are no breaches of the welfare requirements, and staff follow and know well the safeguarding procedures and policies applicable to the whole school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers provide well-planned activities which enthuse the children and are carefully matched to their learning needs. However, occasionally, the most able children find some tasks too easy.
- A strength of teaching in the early years is the use of carefully crafted and probing questioning. For example, staff were able to develop children's writing by applying phonic knowledge and rehearsing sentences through talk.

School details

Unique reference number	141937
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10046599

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	713
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Frank Hilliard
Headteacher	Mrs Cheryl Chatburn
Telephone number	0151 525 9776
Website	www.ricelaneprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@ricelane.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average, while the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- Leaders and governors have created two SEN bases to meet the specific needs of pupils in the school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school in all classes and in a range of subjects. Some of these activities were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtime, at breaktime and in the classroom.
- The inspectors met with pupils, formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan. Inspectors considered minutes of meetings and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils, including those prepared by improvement partners. A scrutiny of the website was also undertaken.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings. Inspectors analysed 120 responses received through the free-text facility on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors also analysed 45 responses to the pupils' survey and 36 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sheryl Farnworth	Ofsted Inspector
John Shutt	Ofsted Inspector
John Daley	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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