

Newton-le-Willows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104775
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	395341
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Adrian Guy HMI

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	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Rahaman
Headteacher	Phil Newton
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Adrian Guy
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons. They observed 17 teachers in the school; this included joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors observed the teaching of reading to small groups as well as listening to individual pupils read. Inspectors held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, such as: those relating to the safeguarding of pupils and their behaviour; the teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and their progress; the school improvement plan and documents identified by the school to support its self-evaluation. Inspectors also took into consideration the 108 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Newton-le-Willows is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school part-way through their education is broadly in line with the national average. The school provides a before- and after-school care club for children who attend the school. Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher who took up post in January 2011. The school exceeded the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Although there are strengths in the relationships and the care the school provides for pupils, it is not good because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are inconsistent. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement has declined since the previous inspection. While there is evidence it has begun to improve, it is not consistent across the school. Children make better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 than they do in Key Stage 2. Consequently, given the pupils' starting points, they make satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Although some good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection, this is not consistent across the school and the impact of teaching over time on the achievement of pupils is satisfactory. The quality of assessment and the extent to which it is used to move pupils' learning on at a brisk pace is not rigorous enough and this limits the progress that pupils make during lessons and over time.
- In general, pupils behave well, are polite, courteous and get on together and, in particular, cooperate well in lessons. However, occasionally some pupils are disengaged in lessons and this leads to some low-level disruption which is managed well. Pupils are confident that, on the infrequent occasions when bullying occurs or they hear racist or homophobic language, it will be dealt with appropriately.
- Leaders, managers and governors are acutely aware of the need to raise attainment. The management of teacher performance is satisfactory. There is a system in place to monitor the progress which pupils make. However, its effectiveness in driving improvement and ensuring robust accountability is

limited by the lack of timely, secure and accurate data about pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils, so that by the time they leave Key Stage 2 most pupils achieve or exceed nationally expected levels, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, make good progress consistently in all years as they move through the school
 - monitoring closely the attainment of pupils and intervening quickly should their progress fall below expected levels.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by ensuring:
 - all teachers have high expectations, communicate clearly what they expect pupils to learn and model how successful outcomes can be achieved
 - all teachers use secure and accurate assessment information to plan work that meets pupils' learning needs and moves their learning forward at a challenging pace
 - marking makes an effective contribution to pupils' progress and enables them to know how to improve further.

- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring:
 - monitoring and accountability are rigorous and regular, leading to a better overview of pupils' achievements and the effective use of assessment information to drive pupils' progress
 - leaders and managers are able to monitor pupils' learning more closely and hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make
 - governors systematically hold the school to account and evaluate improvement against sharp, measurable targets.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are, for many, slightly below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They progress well and by the time they begin Year 1 are working at broadly expected levels. In general, they work well together and are helped to learn to share and take turns. For example, in a Reception class a group of boys showed good levels of cooperation and perseverance to make a map with coloured paper and sticky tape which they marked with different coloured pens. This progress continues as they move through Key Stage 1 so that, by the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. The decline in standards of reading in Key Stage 1 has been reversed in part due to the introduction of a systematic approach to the

teaching of phonics (the sound that letters make) which is having a positive impact on accelerating pupils' progress in reading. However, not all pupils have a secure grasp of this phonetic knowledge. This is because there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching for these groups.

Across Key Stage 2 there is considerable variation in the progress pupils make. For example, in Year 6 pupils make accelerated progress because of the high-quality teaching they receive. However, in other years they make slower progress. For too many pupils the high-quality teaching in Year 6 does not compensate for the slower progress in other years. Consequently, in 2011, while pupils' attainment in English was broadly in line with the national average, in mathematics it was not. Conversely, for current Year 6 pupils, assessment information held by the school suggests that attainment in mathematics and the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 have improved this year but not pupils' attainment in reading and writing, which are below expected levels. Overall, at Key Stage 2 and during their time at the school, pupils' progress is satisfactory.

Most pupils feel they learn a lot in lessons and a very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said their child made good progress at this school. Inspectors, however, found progress to be satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory; there is some good teaching but it is not consistent across the school. Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children are taught well at school and that they are helped to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found teaching to be satisfactory overall due to inconsistencies in quality and the use of assessment across the school which, over time, result in pupils making satisfactory progress.

Cooperation and social skills are promoted well, resulting in pupils supporting each other; for example, in a Year 2 lesson one pupil was able to work out the sounds that make up the word 'made' to aid another pupil who could not.

In the more effective lessons teachers are clear about what it is pupils need to do to learn effectively and communicate accurately what successful outcomes look like. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are fully engaged, supported well by teachers and teaching assistants and challenged in their learning, which proceeds with enthusiasm. For example, in the Reception class a group of children were well supported in applying their developing phonetic knowledge to writing descriptions of African animals. However, these approaches are not consistent across the school. In some lessons teachers do not always have high enough expectations, which results in activities set which do not always match what pupils are capable of achieving. Teachers rely on lengthy verbal explanations rather than modelling clearly what successful outcomes will look like. In addition, a lack of ongoing assessment of pupils' learning impedes their better progress because learning does not move on at a sufficiently challenging pace. Similarly, assessment information is not always used effectively to plan for pupils' next steps in their learning. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across the school. Inspectors

found some evidence of pupils receiving guidance on how to improve their work. However, more often marking simply affirms the efforts of pupils and makes little contribution to their better progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers agreed that behaviour is good in classes and around the school. However, pupils' responses to the survey and their discussions with inspectors revealed that, as well as name calling, they occasionally hear racist and homophobic language used in school and there are some incidents of bullying. Some also felt lessons were sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour and that behaviour in school could be improved. Inspectors found pupils to be polite and courteous towards visitors. They cooperate well and in the most effective lessons this made a positive contribution to their learning. Most lessons proceed in an orderly manner but some are occasionally disrupted by low-level, unacceptable behaviour, although when this occurs it is managed well by staff. The school has raised awareness of pupils' safety on the internet and has taught pupils about issues of cyber-bullying. However, this preventative approach has not been extended to other forms of bullying. Pupils are aware of the different sorts of bullying, racism and homophobia and felt that these occur infrequently but that, when they do, they are confident they are dealt with appropriately by adults.

Nearly all parents and carers and the vast majority of pupils agreed that pupils felt safe in school. Inspectors found that the arrangements for the safety of pupils were appropriate; however, the systematic logging, monitoring and reporting of incidents was not always consistent.

Attendance rates have varied since the last inspection but remained below the national average. However, in the last year these have improved and are now in line with the national picture.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection there has been a period of transition in leadership. The substantive headteacher took up post in 2011. This coincided with some disruption to school routines during a programme of refurbishment in the school. Together with periods of absence and turnover of staff, leaders and governors believe these factors have contributed to, but do not excuse, a decline in pupils' achievement. The school is open and honest in its evaluation of these issues. Senior leaders have ensured that the school is aware of the seriousness of this decline and all staff are aware of the need to improve pupils' achievement as a matter of priority. There is evidence that these improvements are beginning to be seen, for example in the improved attainment in Key Stage 1 and improvements in pupils' attendance. However, the effectiveness of systems by which leaders and members of the governing body can monitor and evaluate the success of the school's actions to improve are currently hampered by inconsistencies in the security and timeliness of data. While the management of teacher performance is satisfactory, the current system to track pupils' progress and attainment limits the ability of leaders to hold teachers to account sufficiently for the progress of pupils or intervene quickly where support is required. Consequently, the school's development planning hinders the ability of

members of the governing body to monitor the impact of the school's work, including the professional development and performance management of teachers, and to hold leaders to account for improvement against sharp, measurable criteria against which progress can be evaluated.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily. The school has developed a thematic curriculum to engage pupils in a range of interesting cross-curricular themes as well as the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. It promotes positive behaviour and safety and provides a broad range of experiences, such as visits to places of interest linked to topics pupils are studying and a range of extra-curricular activities including a well-organised breakfast club and after-school care club.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils including recruitment and vetting procedures are strong, and governors and newly qualified staff have received training to ensure they are knowledgeable about protecting children and ensuring their welfare. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, although the role of the governing body in monitoring these is underdeveloped. Relationships with parents and carers are positive. They speak positively about the school and value the work of the staff. As one parent commented, 'They make every child feel valued'; another stated, 'They are always very welcoming'. Regular newsletters and use of text messaging and the school's website enable them to know what is going on in school, and a large majority of parents and carers feel the school keeps them well informed; however, a small minority felt that communication could be more effective.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Newton-le-Willows Primary School, Newton-le-Willows,
WA12 9UF**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team who visited your school recently. We learnt a lot from listening to you read, watching your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. As you know, we came to see how well you were doing and what you said helped us with our findings.

We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. We were pleased to see that you behave and get along together, although some of you feel your behaviour could be even better. You are given interesting things to learn about and a range of clubs and activities to join in with. You told us that most of you are happy to come to school and enjoy your work and feel safe. The adults at your school work hard at looking after you and keeping you safe. Your well-being is really important to them. I was particularly pleased by the improvements in your attendance. Well done!

We could see that things are improving at your school. These are the things we have agreed with your headteacher that your school should improve next:

- improve your achievement in English and mathematics and make sure you all make good progress
- improve the quality of teaching and make sure the marking and feedback you receive help you make better progress
- make sure that your school leaders and governors are better at checking that your school improves in the way they want it to.

Remember, you can all play your part by working hard and continuing to attend school as often as possible. All the inspectors wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector

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