

Newton Westpark Primary School

Tennyson Avenue, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 5JY

Inspection dates 20–21 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Although pupils' progress has improved significantly in Key Stage 2, it is not yet consistently good across all year groups.
- The slower progress made over time by pupils in Key Stage 1 means that attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, remains below average.
- Progress in English is slowed by the weak use of punctuation and grammar and by underdeveloped handwriting skills.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and that of other adults working within the school is not yet good enough to move pupils on at a fast rate, particularly in writing.
- Although pupils are polite and courteous around school, their attitudes to learning are sometimes not good when teaching does not capture their interest. They do not always make best use of their time in lessons when working independently.
- The dedicated work by the headteacher to lift the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement to higher than satisfactory has been hampered by significant changes to staff and senior leaders and managers.
- The governing body lacks the knowledge to challenge school leaders about why pupils in Years 1 to 3 do not make more progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has tackled previous underachievement well and there is evidence to show that the teaching had significantly improved before recent staff changes.
- The school provides an attractive, warm and welcoming environment for learning.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good.
- Pupils enjoy the regular enrichment activities provided.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and a representative from the local education authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to take into account in planning the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work, including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring, records in relation to behaviour and attendance and those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mr Robert Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mrs Barbara Flitcroft

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newton Westpark is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- A proportion, much higher than that found nationally, are identified as disabled or known to have special educational needs, in particular those identified as requiring support at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has a number of external awards including Investors in People and the Eco-Schools Silver award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs a morning breakfast club, open to all pupils.
- Since the monitoring visit in 2011 there have been significant changes to the teaching staff and senior leadership structure including the appointment of four newly qualified teachers. A deputy headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator have been appointed from existing staff and took up their post from Easter 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better and hence improve achievement by:
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge, especially in writing
 - ensuring pupils make best use of their time when working independently
 - capturing pupils' interest effectively so that attitudes to learning are consistently good in all classes.
- Raise attainment in writing, by focusing more on improving pupils' attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar, sentence construction and handwriting.
- Ensuring that school leadership, management and governance are effective in driving improvement and rigorously checking on the performance of the school by:
 - ensuring school improvement planning communicates to staff the detail and high expectations required to bring about improvements
 - developing the expertise and skills of the new leadership team, so that systems for monitoring teaching and learning are more robust and swift action is taken to tackle teaching that is less than good
 - ensuring governors have the knowledge required to hold school leaders to account for the rate of pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement has improved over time, especially in Years 4 to 6 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, pupils' progress in writing is not as good as in mathematics by the end of Year 6. The quality of pupils' writing is variable throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those known to have special educational needs make good progress overall. Many enter with particularly low starting points and benefit from programmes such as 'Skylarks' nurture room, which builds the self-esteem and resilience necessary to promote good learning. In this respect, the school is promoting equality of opportunity well, fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination effectively.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with varying levels of skills which are overall, below those expected for their age. The children quickly learn to link letters and sounds because sessions are sharply focused and they make good progress in this class because they are involved, challenged and excited by their learning environment. Consequently, most children are close to the level expected for their age when they start Year 1.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average in reading and writing. Progress rates in Years 1 and 2 are not yet good.
- In Key Stage 2, there has been a gradual improvement in reading, writing and mathematics leading to broadly average attainment over time. Progress has also improved, however, it is still variable and pupils have yet to make consistently good progress.
- The school promotes the development of new and exciting vocabulary through the curriculum. This has led to good progress in developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, their written work throughout the school shows a lack of application of basic skills. Sentence construction skills are limited by a lack of application of the correct use of punctuation and grammar, age-appropriate spellings and fluent joined-up handwriting.
- In the best lessons learning moved at a brisk pace. For example in a good Year 3 lesson the teacher brought writing about the Vikings to life by introducing role play. Pupils enjoyed exploring the feelings and thoughts of the character by asking frequent questions.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There have been significant changes in the teaching staff at the school with 50% of teaching staff changing within the past year. Inspection evidence found that the quality of teaching overall requires improvement. Throughout the school, teachers organise their lessons well. In Years 2, 3, 4 and 6 teaching is good because activities are varied and pupils are engaged in their learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils' imagination was fired up as they searched for information about 'their planet'. Effective questioning by the teacher helped shape their thoughts before they wrote a letter describing the planet.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 deliver a structured programme to encourage young readers' grasp of the sounds that letters make. By the age of six many pupils are well versed at decoding for reading and confidence in having a go at using it in their writing is very apparent. Nevertheless, not all reading books are suitably matched to pupils' abilities, thus reducing opportunities for them to read for understanding and purpose.
- In some lessons, teachers spend too long in summing up the lesson or over stressing teaching points to the whole class that are only relevant to a few. In these situations some pupils lose interest and a few react with low level disruption.
- The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities to extend the pupils' vocabulary. These include an extensive use of school visits and 'enrichment' which introduces pupils to new experiences. These activities help to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills by promoting discussion.
- The analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations show that teachers do not systematically

teach or reinforce basic skills in writing, including, spelling, punctuation and grammar and how to develop a fluent joined handwriting style. Teachers mark books diligently, but basic points in relation to sentence construction and presentation are not always picked up. On occasion, some teachers' assistants modelling of writing is incorrect.

- There are many layers of teaching to support disabled pupils and those known to have special educational needs. Identified pupils have frequent targeted support throughout the school. Consequently, they make good progress and are closing the gap on their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **requires improvement**

- Pupils contribute to the smooth running of the school and are given a voice through the school council, eco teams and through their charity work. They have been responsible for the introduction of new equipment.
- Around school pupils are polite and, courteous. They move sensibly and show care and concern for each other.
- In some lessons, when teaching does not engage their interest, pupils' attitudes to learning are not good. The inspection examined the school's procedures for the management of behaviour and found that the school identified no cases of significant harassment or exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils are extremely positive about the overall behaviour in school. They place their trust in adults who care for them and appreciate the many opportunities they have to express any fears and worries they may have. Pupils cite incidents of bullying and harassment as rare and that if they occur they are dealt with swiftly and appropriately by teachers.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities to explore whether the actions of others are right or wrong, thus making a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development.
- Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of how to stay safe when crossing roads or playing outside after school hours. Older pupils have a good understanding associated with the use of modern technology, such as computers and mobile phones. They also have a good understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise.
- Several pupils attend the breakfast club, which ensures a good start to the day. Such initiatives and the induction procedures into the Early Years Foundation Stage have been instrumental in improving attendance, which is now average.

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- There is a sense of common purpose amongst the staff to improve the school's performance. Morale is high because the relatively new teachers, who comprise 50% of the staff, feel they have clear direction and support from the headteacher.
- The senior leadership team has been strengthened with the recent appointment of a deputy headteacher and special needs coordinator. They communicate a shared vision and work well together. However, the team is in its infancy and its work has not yet fully impacted on raising pupils' achievement, accelerating their progress or improving the overall quality of teaching beyond satisfactory.
- The local authority identified a concern in the school's performance last year. They have provided effective support for the teaching of English and mathematics, which has helped to improve the quality of teaching in these subjects.
- Senior leaders and managers have developed a robust tracking system to monitor pupils' progress. This adds strength to the school's ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and success of the curriculum as well as accurately identifying key priorities for the school. However, school improvement planning does not go into enough precise detail, or communicate high enough expectations required to bring about improvements, especially in

writing.

- The school provides a secure site with checks on all staff and visitors robustly carried out on entry to the school. Safeguarding arrangements overall meet national requirements.
 - The curriculum includes a balance of activities. Strengths in the curriculum include enrichment activities and the good promotion of pupils' speaking and listening skills.
 - The pupil premium has been used effectively to support and provide first hand life experiences and specific help for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, enabling them to make similar progress to their peers.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body have been supportive in tackling previous underachievement. However they lack the knowledge and skills required for in depth analysis of the school's work in order to both challenge and support the headteacher. This limits the capacity of the school to improve further.
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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 pupil's 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 pupil's 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	106422
Social care unique reference number	Not applicable
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	400844

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jack Walls
Headteacher	Miss Vivien Birchall
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
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