

# Wharton CE Primary School

Greville Drive, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 3EP

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Progress in years 3 to 6 in mathematics has not been consistently strong, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Although there is some good teaching, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics and there are too few examples of outstanding teaching overall.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the work of the school.
- The governing body challenges the school vigorously and is fully committed to driving improvement.
- The overall quality of teaching is improving substantially under the current leadership.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- Standards in reading and writing are improving well.
- Pupils behave well. They are safe and well cared for. Their attendance is above average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior teaching staff and members of the governing body.
- In addition, 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered as well as some written responses from parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation which included assessment information, safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation and local authority monitoring reports and samples of pupils' work.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Desmond Stubbs	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Almost all pupils are White British in this larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school was formed as the result of the amalgamation of a separate infant and junior school. The newly formed school opened in 2010, when it moved to the current site.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2011.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is also similar to most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average.
- The school provides nursery and after-school care on site, neither of which is managed by the governing body and will be inspected separately.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects and thus raise achievement further by:
  - ensuring that there is always enough challenge, especially for the more-able pupils in mathematics
  - always using time effectively and setting a consistently good pace to learning
  - making use of assessment information, including marking, to ensure that all pupils always know what they must do to improve their work and make best progress
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn and practice skills independently.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- For the relatively short time that the school has been open, pupils have attained broadly average standards overall at both key stages. In the past year, however, school assessments and analysis of unvalidated national data show that progress improved substantially, particularly in reading and writing.
- Progress in mathematics has been more patchy over the last two years due to some earlier teaching which was less effective than that seen currently. Although nearly all pupils make expected progress from their starting points, too many more-able pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Expected progress in reading compares closely to the national picture. New initiatives are moving reading skills along well. Year 2 pupils are keen to read and apply their knowledge of letters and sounds well. In Year 6, pupils read fluently and choose books freely from the good range available to them.
- The impact of the whole-school focus on reading in the past year can be seen in pupils' writing. Pupils in Year 1, for example, tackle independent writing confidently due to their sound grasp of letter sounds. Samples of Year 6 pupils' work from the previous year show high standards of presentation and there is a good range and purpose to their writing.
- Currently, children entering Reception have skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations. This has not always been the case and previous cohorts have shown lower levels of mathematical, communication and social awareness. However, currently they make good progress because they are taught well and benefit from a good range of activities that challenge their curiosity and encourage their independence. Children who recently entered Year 1 are working securely within expectations and are well prepared to tackle the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others from their relative starting points. A new coordinator has been appointed and provision has improved and teaching is more challenging. School data supported by inspection evidence show that attainment and progress are improving securely as a result.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of learning has improved significantly under the current leadership of the school.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and their attentiveness and good attitudes contribute well to their improving progress. Although pupils enjoy opportunities to work in groups and test out their ideas together, they do not have many opportunities to work and apply skills independently.
- While teaching has improved substantially over the past year so that there is much that is now good, there is too little outstanding teaching to model best practice. In addition, some shortcomings remain; specifically in the level of challenge for more able-pupils in mathematics.
- Good teaching in literacy lessons has a positive effect on pupils' progress in reading and writing. Teachers promote speaking skills well through questioning and group work. This helps them to clarify the language they need for their writing. There are clearly different expectations for the varying ability groups so that all are challenged appropriately. Nevertheless, at times, there is lack of pace because a few tasks are too repetitive.
- A relative weakness in some teaching of mathematics is the lack of challenge, particularly for more-able pupils, and this has slowed progress in the past. Actions taken by leaders and managers are bringing about the necessary improvement. Although some lessons seen during the inspection had good features and generally engaged pupils well, at times more-able pupils have simply been expected to do more sums than the others rather than work at a more advanced level. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils constructed graphs where the highest number was four. This did not present adequate challenge for the more-able pupils.

Conversely, some lessons challenged all groups well; good mathematical language was promoted and all pupils were challenged to improve their work.

- Teachers' marking has improved significantly because this has been a recent school focus. Marking is consistent so pupils understand the system used but there are a few occasions where comments such as 'keep trying hard' do not clearly point the way to improvement, especially to less-able pupils. Teachers' use of assessment generally has improved as a result of ongoing school development in this aspect of their work.
- Teachers manage pupils well and relationships in classes are good. They promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging pupils to be cooperative and sensitive to the views of others.

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

- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered.
- They enjoy learning and have positive attitudes to school. A typical pupil comment was, 'The teacher makes you feel you want to come to school'. Pupils' attendance is above average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show good awareness of, and tolerance towards, others. Pupils contribute well to the life of the school by taking on additional responsibilities such as being 'eco-warriors', carrying out energy surveys and recycling. They say, 'We all try to be friends'.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a firm grasp of what makes an unsafe situation. They understand, for example, the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying. They are mindful of others and quick to offer help when it is needed.
- Parents and carers express few concerns about their children's behaviour and safety. They are confident that the school staff know and care for the pupils well.
- Teachers manage behaviour effectively and pupils understand what is acceptable and what is not.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has been a driving force in the school and is bringing about rapid and secure improvement. During the past year since her appointment, she has harnessed the skills of effective senior leaders and the governing body and, with their cohesive support, has brought significant improvement to teaching and pupils' progress. Following an incisive review of the school's work, leaders accurately identified clear priorities for improvement. In order to bring some necessary urgency to their action planning, they have worked closely and successfully with a local authority consultancy team over the past year.
- This strategy has been beneficial to the school, in helping to identify and eliminate underperformance in teaching and increase the rate of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, there is no complacency among staff. All know how they are accountable for continued progress.
- Systems for monitoring teaching and managing teachers' performance have been quickly embedded. The 'Teachers' Standards' are clearly articulated to all staff and used effectively as a tool in driving improvement, maintaining high expectations and pointing to where continued improvement can be made.
- Both staff and parents are very supportive of the leadership and acknowledge the rigour and clear direction that it brings to the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are very effective in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being in school. Appropriate training for all staff and governors is reviewed regularly and there is an established culture of safe practice in the school.
- The curriculum meets requirements and adequately provides equality of opportunity for pupils

including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. It is enriched by the teaching of Spanish as well as a range of clubs and visits which assist pupils' learning and their personal development.

- The school works well with parents and provides valuable family support when it is requested. Parents are happy with the information they receive and the systems for contacting the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance has improved significantly. Extensive training has given the governing body the skills needed to hold the school robustly to account.
  - Its clarity of vision for the school underpins vigorous and honest self-evaluation and well-focused challenge and support for the school. Along with the work of other leaders, it has clearly demonstrated strong capacity to drive further the improvements that have already taken place.
  - The school's use of resources including the pupil premium is overseen efficiently, as are other statutory requirements.
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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 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>	135635
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	402724

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Not applicable
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	408
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	Not applicable
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	Not applicable
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Duncan Fitzgibbons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Claire Spinks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 288110
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