

Pensby Primary School

Greenbank Drive, Pensby, Wirral, CH61 5UE

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- As a result of school leaders' strong focus on developing the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement has improved and is now good. By the end of Year 6 attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are polite and well-mannered and take care of each other and their school environment. Good relationships exist throughout and pupils trust the adults to keep them safe.
- Exemplary behaviour in class and around school is helping pupils to make good, and often outstanding, progress. They are eager to learn and try their best to succeed.
- Most teaching is now of at least good quality with some examples of outstanding practice throughout the school.
- Due to the drive and determination of the headteacher a calm, cohesive school community exists. This follows the upheaval of the recent move to the new building from the separate sites that used to house the pupils.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a very good understanding of how well pupils are achieving. This is used effectively to ensure that training and support for all staff are strongly focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils consistently reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1.
- A small amount of teaching is not yet good and teaching overall is not yet outstanding.
- Opportunities to make links between subjects, respond to pupils' interests and develop their creativity and cultural understanding are not fully embedded in the curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons and made a number of short visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning. They listened to readers and observed the teaching of early reading skills in the school. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work from the current school year and from previous years.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, one group of parents, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, one representative of the local authority and members of staff. The inspectors also spoke informally with parents.
- In the course of the inspection, inspectors took account of 19 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), several letters from parents and 21 staff questionnaires.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, strategic plan and analysis of pupils' current progress. Planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kirsteen Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of similar size to most other primary schools.
- A breakfast-, after-school club and wrap-around care provision for younger children are managed by the governing body.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who attend the school is lower than average and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Fewer pupils than average are supported at school action. The numbers of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average and has risen since the last inspection. Overall, the school serves a community of average deprivation, although some pockets of disadvantage exist within the local area.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The new school building opened in May 2012. Building work continues on the site to prepare the other half of the school building for the primary special school which will be located there in due course.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, and make sure that all teaching is of at least good quality, so that all pupils, particularly the more-able at Key Stage 1, make the progress expected of them, by ensuring that teachers:
 - build on the best practice that exists in the school
 - use marking consistently to show pupils what they need to do to improve, and give them time to act on the information provided
 - enable all pupils to use a fluent, joined handwriting style and know how to improve the presentation of their written work.
- By July 2013, develop the curriculum still further so that teachers consistently provide pupils with relevant, active learning opportunities that capture their interests, challenge their thinking and promote their skills to learn independently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skill levels close to what might be expected for their age in most areas of learning. However, many children's communication skills, including that of writing, are below age-related expectations at this time.
- They settle well into the Early Years Foundation Stage and learn quickly because members of staff work well as a team to provide exciting activities that encourage children to become interested and independent learners. As a result, they make good progress and enter Year 1 with communication skills much closer to what might be expected for their age.
- In Key Stage 1 progress continues at a broadly similar pace, although compared to the national average, fewer pupils reach the higher levels for this age group. Progress accelerates in Key

Stage 2 and the upward trend in attainment which began two years ago has been maintained. Year 6 pupils reached well-above average standards in the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2012 in all subjects, although reading and mathematics are slightly stronger than writing.

- As a result of early identification of need and the good provision made for them, pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make similar, good progress to their peers in the school.
- The very small group of pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils in the school as do the pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. Leaders are aware that some variation exists between the achievement of boys and girls year-on-year but no overall pattern exists to this ongoing variation.
- Teachers ensure that a focus on developing pupils' speaking skills is successful. Pupils enjoy working together with a partner or in a group so that all ages make good progress in listening skills and demonstrate a willingness to share their ideas with others.
- The teaching of reading has a high profile. Letters and sounds are taught systematically in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 ensuring that early skills are developed well. Volunteer readers play an important role in enabling pupils to read regularly and the light, airy new school library is at the heart of the school and popular with all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mostly at least good and some is outstanding. The quality of teaching in the school has improved since the last inspection because of senior leaders' clear focus on pupils' learning and the provision of high quality professional development.
- A common strength in all lessons is the strong teamwork of teachers and teaching assistants. This helps to create and sustain calm, purposeful learning environments that promote high expectations of behaviour.
- Typical characteristics of the most effective teaching seen during the inspection include:
 - teachers with high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - thoroughly planned lessons that set a brisk pace of learning, provide imaginative activities and set a good level of challenge that is well-matched to pupils' abilities
 - effective questioning skills used by teachers and teaching assistants
 - explicit links to pupils' previous learning and clear next steps to help them improve further.
- Teachers' marking generally praises pupils' efforts and the best examples provide guidance about how work can be improved. However, the quality of feedback is variable across the school. For example, pupils are not always given enough information about how they can reach the higher levels, particularly in Key Stage 1, and teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to the guidance provided.
- Inspection evidence indicates that a common handwriting style is not yet in place and not all teachers demand the highest quality of presentation from pupils. The lack of a neat joined handwriting style prevents pupils reaching even higher standards in English.
- Most parents' responses and comments indicate that they are pleased with the teaching their children receive in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils take a great pride in their school and especially their new building. They are very happy to be on one site where pupils of all ages can play and learn together. Older pupils enjoy helping the younger ones; for example when they move to their playground at lunchtime.
- At playtimes pupils play happily and sensibly. Pupils are courteous and considerate. They understand the different kinds of bullying and say that cases are rare and that, if they do occur,

they are acted upon immediately by the adults in the school.

- Behaviour around school and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils concentrate well and, in the best lessons, are engrossed in their learning. Lessons are very rarely disrupted because of incidents of misbehaviour.
- Many pupils enjoy taking on responsible roles in school. Members of the school council contribute to the decision making in the school. The Chair of the Governing Body attends their meeting from time to time and school council members report to governing body meetings.
- Pupils feel safe and are helped to manage risk well. They take care on the playground as they know that space is restricted at the moment. Pupils are looking forward to the time when the building work is finished and the new school field is available for playtimes. They understand how to use the internet safely.
- The Pensby Children's Club, which is now managed by the governing body of the school, provides high quality wrap-around care. The location of the club alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms helps smooth the transition of those nursery children who attend the wrap-around provision for part of the day. Older pupils enjoy the good range of activities provided in the popular breakfast- and after-school clubs.
- The school has a warm and welcoming ethos which is valued by parents. Above average levels of attendance demonstrate pupils' very positive attitudes to all the school has to offer.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff at Pensby Primary work as a well-organised and effective team. Strategies such as coaching and mentoring are well established and are improving the quality of teaching in the school.
- Since the previous inspection leaders, including governors, have worked successfully to raise the achievement of pupils. The clear vision shown by the headteacher is shared by all and the school motto, 'Be amazing – reach for the stars', reflects the high expectations of pupils and staff.
- Senior and middle leaders' roles are clear and they readily assume responsibility for their subject and management areas. The school knows its strengths well and strategic plans are clearly focused on the correct priorities for development. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school are increasingly effective. This has improved teaching and learning since the last inspection and indicates the school has good capacity to continue to improve.
- The performance of staff is rigorously managed. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and teachers are held to account for the achievement of those in their class.
- Gaps in achievement are picked up early through careful analysis of the school's detailed tracking system. If pupils do fall behind, leaders take prompt action to provide the extra support needed to help them catch up as quickly as possible.
- The curriculum is balanced and provides some opportunities for pupils to practise the basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) across other subjects. However, it does not always inspire or capture the interests of all learners, particularly the more reluctant writers. Opportunities to develop pupils' creativity and increase their cultural understanding were not strongly evident during the inspection.
- Staff promote equal opportunities well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupil premium funding helps to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well given their starting points. All pupils have equal access to the trips arranged to enrich the curriculum and to the varied extra-curricular activities provided.
- Well-established and effective partnerships have been created with other agencies to support the needs of more vulnerable pupils and their families. A good working relationship exists with the local primary special school that will relocate to the same site when the final building phase is complete.

- The school participates in the school-centred initial teacher training programme. Inspection evidence indicates that the graduate students based in the school are being prepared well for their future career in the teaching profession.
 - The school works well with parents to help them support their children’s learning. Workshops on developing early reading skills and new approaches to teaching mathematics help parents to support their children’s academic progress. Parents say that this is a good school and praise school leaders and staff for the care and education their children receive.
 - The local authority has provided effective support for the development of this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and has a wide range of experience. Governors have a good understanding of how the school is performing. They ensure that senior leaders are held to account and that the school is on a strong financial footing.
 - Governors make certain that the school’s arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements well.
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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

Unique reference number	135497
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	402709

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Spencer
Headteacher	Kate Brown
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
Telephone number	0151 348 4145
Fax number	0151 342 0240
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