

# The District CofE Primary School

Patterson Street, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 9PZ

**Inspection dates** 18–19 December 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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not achieved as well as they should. Not enough make expected progress in mathematics and reading.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Not enough teaching is good or better and it is not always clear what pupils are to learn. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough, and marking does not make it clear how to improve.
- Leaders and managers in the past have not checked how effective the school is and have not fully embedded an action plan to raise achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Too little progress has been made since the previous inspection.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is improving.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They feel safe and behave well.
- Current leaders have improved the school building. It is a more pleasant place to learn.
- The temporary executive headteachers, leaders, managers and governors have changed the school for the better in a short period of time.
- Leaders work well with the local authority to bring stability to the school and move it forward.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of staff and members of the governing body as well as a representative from the local authority.
- In addition, inspectors took account of 15 parents' responses via Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including national assessment data, information about pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance, local authority reports, samples of pupils' work and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elaine Maloney	Additional Inspector
Sheila Loughlin	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Most pupils are White British in the larger-than-average sized primary school.
- Almost half of the pupils are supported by funding through the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is average.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A breakfast club and after school club are provided by the school during term time.
- The school meets current floor standards which are the minimum government expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current executive head-teacher has led the school for two terms since April 2012. The management of the school has been shared with a second executive headteacher, appointed in September 2012, who will take over the full headship in January 2013.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - using the outstanding teaching in the school as a model for all lessons
  - making sure that what pupils have to learn is always clear and precise so that they know what is expected of them
  - ensuring that good quality marking and feedback to pupils are fully embedded in all classes and across all subjects
  - raising teachers' expectations especially with regard to the presentation of pupils' work.
- Raise attainment in mathematics and reading by:
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematics skills in different ways and across subjects
  - further developing pupils' reading skills by ensuring they read books that are hard enough and have good access to books and technology across all subjects to read for pleasure and find information.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
  - building on the positive work done in the last two terms by the executive headteachers to put action plans in place to improve teaching and achievement
  - checking the results of these actions rigorously to plan for continued improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When children start school their skills are generally well below those typically expected for their age. They get off to a good start because they are taught well, and well cared for in Nursery and Reception classes. Children develop good social skills and make good progress in all that they do, although they are still a little below expected levels when they go into Year 1.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average at the end of Year 2. Achievement from pupils' starting points is good. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is patchy but stronger in Year 2 and the results in national tests show attainment is rising.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 shows a rising trend. Nevertheless, it is still below the national average. Progress picked up throughout the school last year. Almost all of the pupils who left Year 6 made expected progress in English and some did better than expected. Writing was stronger than reading where a few pupils, especially the more-able, did not do as well as expected. Fewer made expected progress in mathematics and pupils lack confidence in applying their numeracy skills. School assessments and pupils' work show that pupils currently make steady progress overall in Years 3 to 6 and are on track to reach broadly average standards, despite having some ground to make up in mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading and like to choose books for themselves. They make sense of new words by using their letters and sounds, although this makes some rather slow readers. Some pupils do not read regularly at home. Those who do make better progress. In Year 6 standards in reading are generally in line with expectations, although the more-able readers do not read books that challenge them enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others in the school and a few do better than expected. Work with individual pupils and small groups is helping to boost their skills. Pupils' needs are reviewed regularly to make sure their progress continues as well as it should.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to create smaller class sizes and additional teaching. This is having a good impact on the progress of these pupils and gaps between the attainment of different groups are closing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although there is some good and outstanding teaching in the school there is not enough and overall teaching requires improvement.
- Where teaching is most effective the teachers have excellent subject knowledge and inspire the pupils to do their very best. Teachers question pupils throughout the lesson to check on their progress and no time is lost in moving pupils on to further challenges. Although such teaching is evident in several lessons it is not yet shared effectively throughout the school.
- In the best lessons pupils are absolutely clear about what they have to learn. This is not always the case and then pupils are unsure what is expected of them. In some lessons and group activities too much is attempted and so the focus of learning is unclear. This slows, rather than increases, pupils' learning and they become confused because there is no time for them to learn one thing thoroughly before moving on to the next.
- Teachers are beginning to make good use of information gained from checking pupils' progress in order to plan lessons. Systems for helping pupils to see their own progress in numeracy are good. In the best lessons teachers set tasks that are just at the correct level but this is not always the case, for example pupils are not always given reading books that are difficult enough.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not always supportive. The best marking is seen in English where teachers usually give pointers for improvement. Even here there are some occasions when marking does not correct errors, such as in punctuation and spelling. Marking in other subjects is not as good as in English; teachers' expectations are not high enough and poor

presentation of work is accepted too often.

- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. They are well trained and use their skills well to support groups of pupils and help them to play a full part in lessons.
- Relationships in classes are good. Pupils know that teachers value their ideas. This increases pupils' confidence and makes them more eager to behave well and work hard.

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

- Pupils' good behaviour helps them to learn well. They listen to their teachers in lessons, are respectful and work hard.
- They also know how to behave well outside of lessons. They enjoy the social chatter in the dining room and their behaviour during assemblies, as well as their singing, is highly impressive.
- Relationships are good. Pupils are caring toward each other and respect the cultures and backgrounds of others. They are always polite and well mannered.
- Pupils make a good contribution to the everyday life of the school. Every pupil can have a say in school matters through the school council. The eco-committee is watchful over the school's use of energy and school prefects make sure that pupils move safely around the school. The worship committee has an active part in planning school worship and ensuring that the technology for assemblies works well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They share trusting relationships with all of the grown-ups and feel safe in the playground. They insist that there is no bullying of any kind and that name-calling is rare. Pupils are aware of the dangers they might face outside of school, including those linked to the internet and mobile phones, and have sensible views about keeping themselves both safe and healthy.
- Overall, the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' attendance is average and currently improving. They are suitably prepared to move on to the next stages of their education.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Frequent changes of leadership in the past have prevented the school from making the headway it should. Although management requires improvement it has improved during the last two terms with significant changes under the leadership of the two executive headteachers.
- Staff morale is high because expectations have risen and at all levels they work with a shared common purpose to drive the school forward.
- Leaders, including the governing body, rightly took the decision to 'go back to basics' and focus on raising attainment and speeding up progress. They have worked successfully with local authority advisers to improve teaching and set challenging targets for attainment. Improvements in the 2012 national tests begin to reveal how good the school can become.
- Restructuring the roles of senior leaders has made them more accountable for pupils' achievement. They now check closely on pupils' progress, identify aspects that need attention and provide support where needed.
- Systems to check how effective teaching is are sharper and have identified aspects that need attention. Although improvements can be seen there remain variations between classes. Nevertheless, considerable training for teachers is helping them continue to improve their skills. Teachers are set challenging targets linked to the progress pupils make and leaders have not been slow to challenge ineffective teaching.
- The curriculum is strongly focused on improving literacy and numeracy skills. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to develop writing across subjects but this cannot be said of mathematics where pupils do not use their skills widely enough to solve practical mathematical problems. Pupils' learning and personal development are enriched by a selection of clubs after

school, visits and visitors and, for Year 6, a residential trip.

- Leaders now have a very accurate view of the school and know what it needs to do to improve. Actions for change are in place but not yet fully embedded. The monitoring of change to check on the actions' impact on teaching and outcomes is still in the early stages. Leaders know that despite the positive steps so far, more remains to be done. However, with the new leadership and governing body the school is now very capable of continuing to improve.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The depth and range of expertise in the governing body, supported by effective training, makes it able to challenge the school vigorously and support it in equal measure. It knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well, and what must be done to improve its performance. Astute appointments of leaders have already set the school up well for success in the future. Governors have a good overview of the quality of teaching. They check that salary awards are linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They review the results of national tests and understand where improvements need to be made. Governors manage the budget well and are aware that the spending of the pupil premium funding has a positive effect on the outcomes for these pupils. They make sure that all pupils are given equally the opportunities they need to achieve well. Safeguarding of pupils is well in hand. Policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly to make sure that they are understood and remain effective.
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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>	104792
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	404957

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gareth Cross
<b>Executive Headteachers</b>	Ian Wellens/Diane Bate
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678250
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