

# Cathcart Street Primary School

Dover Close, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 3JY

**Inspection dates** 29–30 January 2013

<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

- Although there is good teaching in the school, it is not consistent throughout and there is too little outstanding teaching.
- Standards in English and mathematics are below average. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels in national tests. Good progress has not been sustained over time.
- Attendance is below average and too many pupils do not arrive in school on time.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is a very caring school where pupils feel safe and behave well. Pupils who need additional help are provided for very well.
- The progress pupils make is beginning to gather pace because teaching is managed well, and is improving.
- The curriculum provides some exciting learning opportunities for pupils.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, including governors, have successfully steered the school through a difficult time since the previous inspection and are improving the school rapidly.
- The school has worked well with the local authority to tackle priorities and put systems in place to continue improving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions took place with members of staff and the governing body, pupils and representatives from the local authority.
- Also taken into account were the parents' responses via the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including national assessment data and the school's own assessments, minutes of the governing body meetings, local authority reports, pupils' work and information relating to the management of teaching, the curriculum and safeguarding of pupils.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rebecca Lawton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by funding through the pupil premium , including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those children from service families is well above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by school action.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs in average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Before- and after-school care is available on site. This is not managed by the governing body and is reported on separately.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased following the recent closure of two local schools.
- Considerable extension and refurbishment work to the school building has recently been completed.
- There have been considerable changes in the staff since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - giving pupils the opportunity to try things out for themselves so that they do not always rely on their teachers
  - using time in lessons well to make sure they start promptly, and that pupils do not listen for too long and miss out on activity time
  - making sure that pupils are always clear about what they are expected to learn, and how they can achieve their goals in the lesson.
- Raise standards in English and mathematics to meet the national expectations by:
  - ensuring that more-able pupils are always given work in writing and mathematics that brings the very best out of them
  - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting throughout the school
  - providing more opportunities for all pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in different ways across subjects.
- Improve attendance and punctuality by building on the strengthening links with parents whose children are often late or absent and continuing to monitor attendance rigorously.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When children enter the nursery their abilities are generally well below typical expectations for their age, especially in their social skills and in their ability to communicate with others. They make expected progress through the Nursery and Reception classes so that most are working within nationally expected levels by the time they move into Year 1.
- There is good support for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage whose speech and language skills are still at very early stages of development. Well-planned individual help, careful checking and lots of confidence-building ensure that important learning is given a good boost so that children are quickly able to learn alongside others in their group.
- Progress is beginning to pick up in Years 1 and 2. The impact of the new surroundings, better resources and more settled and improving teaching are all beginning to have an effect. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been below average in the past but improved to broadly average in reading and writing last year. Standards in mathematics remained low despite showing an improvement. Current school assessments show that the improving picture is on track to continue but the number of pupils set to achieve Level 3 remains an issue to be tackled.
- Standards in English dipped at the end of Year 6 in 2012, while mathematics improved. Nevertheless, both remained below the national average, particularly the numbers of pupils who achieved Level 5. The school has begun to tackle these issues well. Pupils are grouped and taught according to their abilities in mathematics, and a whole-school writing project is raising pupils' and teachers' expectations. Pupils in Year 6 know how good their writing is and what they need to do to improve it. However, spelling and handwriting remain important issues to be addressed. There is a good focus on number and calculation but limited evidence of mathematics outside the classroom, where pupils can solve real-life problems on their own.
- The actions taken by the school are having a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress overall. School data show that currently there is some good and better than expected progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils in Year 2 read well. They enjoy books and use their knowledge of how letters and sounds work to tackle unfamiliar words confidently. Reading in Year 6 is in line with expectation for pupils' age. Pupils read fluently and with good understanding of what they read. They enjoy novels and have clear preferences for different authors. They like the choice of books available in the school library and extend their reading at home with their own books and magazines.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make steady progress. Well-planned steps in learning taught effectively by skilful teaching assistants help pupils to keep pace particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Pupil premium funding effectively sees that there is no discrimination in the learning for different groups of pupils. All who need additional support, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, receive it. The benefits are clearly in the way that there are no significant gaps between the achievement in different groups.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- A significant improvement since the previous inspection is the way in which teachers use assessment information and involve pupils in measuring their own progress in order to help them learn more quickly. There is a consistent method for marking which pupils understand and see as helpful. They are given good guidance about how to improve on what they have done.
- Planning is usually clear and builds effectively on what pupils have learned before. Although varying abilities are recognised in teachers' plans the tasks pupils are given are often too similar. This means that work often does not test the more able well enough to move their learning on quickly. Teachers, generally, do not give pupils the scope they need to be resourceful and learn for themselves.

- Technology is used effectively by teachers to help pupils learn. They use electronic whiteboards well and computers and laptops feature well in lessons.
- Where teaching is most effective there are high expectations of what all pupils will achieve. Pupils are very clear about what they are learning and the pace of teachers' questioning and lively demonstration keeps them on their toes. Pupils are questioned well to test their understanding and encourage their thinking, making sure that objectives are being reached. Sometimes, however, objectives and teaching are not clear enough for all pupils. Some become confused about what they have to do and do not make the progress they should.
- Sometimes demonstrations and questioning go on for too long even when it is clear that pupils are ready to move on and work independently. Use of time is also an issue where pupils are kept sitting unnecessarily on the carpet when they could be getting on with independent work.
- Teaching assistants are valued members of the teaching team. They are well trained in the activities they lead. They know the pupils well and contribute significantly to pupils' learning and progress. A good example was how a teaching assistant's work took more-able pupils' mathematical learning to a higher level. The pupils fed back their new learning to the rest of the class.
- Teachers manage pupils well. They value the contributions and effort that pupils make and establish trusting relationships. Consequently, pupils learn confidently, they enjoy lessons and are willing to share their ideas with others.

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

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They are eager to learn and behave well in lessons and around the school. They are mindful of others and their behaviour and relationships reflect the caring and supportive ethos of the school.
- Pupils are well mannered and polite towards adults and each other. They respect pupils' different backgrounds and ideas and have especially good links with a school in China which increases their understanding of other ways of life.
- They say they feel safe in school and give their own behaviour 'eight out of ten'. They are well aware of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and say that there is no 'real' bullying in school, just occasional falling out which is quickly resolved. Pupils have a sensible view about keeping themselves safe and healthy outside of school.
- Attendance and punctuality are improving because of the school's positive action and increasingly effective work with parents. Nevertheless, attendance is still below average and this, along with punctuality, are aspects to improve. This is more evident, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where too many children miss out on important learning at the start of their session.
- Pupils make a good contribution to the everyday life of the school. The active school council considers all pupils' ideas about improvements and manages a budget to help put plans into action. Others take on caring roles in the playground, such as buddies and play leaders for the infants. Pupils are proud of their new surrounding, look after them well and are always willing to lend a cheerful and helpful hand where needed.

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

- The headteacher, with effective support from senior leaders and the governing body, has successfully guided the school through a difficult time of change while bringing significant improvements in key areas of its work.
- Work in partnership with the local authority has strengthened the school's position so that leaders are now capable of continuing to improve the school further on their own.
- The focus on improving teaching and learning has been central to the school's work. Despite

many staff changes, leaders have shown great strength in establishing a settled team that is committed to the school's ambitions and future success.

- Systems for managing teachers' performance are very robust. All teachers know what is expected of them with regard to the Teachers' Standards document. Classroom performance is systematically evaluated by the headteacher and senior staff, who themselves provide strong role models for others. Professional development is planned carefully to meet whole-school and individual teacher's needs. All teachers know how they are accountable for pupils' progress and regular reviews of performance ensure that this is foremost in their work.
  - Teachers are also encouraged to work together and discuss their work with others to see how it can improve further.
  - As a result of these actions, the quality of teaching shows good improvement and pupils currently are beginning to make good and sometimes rapid progress. Leaders acknowledge, however, that good and better teaching must be embedded and progress sustained for the schools overall effectiveness to be good.
  - Subject leaders work hard to develop a curriculum to meet all pupils' needs. They use each others' strengths and relative experience well to plan topics that will engage pupils in interesting learning, including activities outside lesson time and visits to enrich pupils' experiences and help their personal development. There is a strong focus on writing for different purposes but less emphasis on planning practical problem-solving activities using mathematics skills.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is well informed about the school's work and has an action plan to help drive further improvement. The governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement and how good the school can become. Through relevant training, governors are increasingly holding the school to account. Statutory responsibilities are dealt with efficiently. Safeguarding measures are carefully checked to ensure that government requirements are maintained. The governing body properly reviews the headteacher's performance and sets targets. It has an overview of the school's teaching performance and how it is linked to pay progression. The pupil premium funding is discussed with school leaders and decisions over its use are shared to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
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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>	105048
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	400750

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neil Massingham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosemarie Bishop
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 647 7349
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 647 2325
<b>Email address</b>	schooloffice@cathcartstreet.wirral.sch.uk



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