

Spinney Avenue Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Spinney Avenue, Hough Green, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 8LD

Inspection dates 26–27 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- All pupils make good progress across the school. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they reach standards which are above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with those who are eligible for the additional government funding, make good progress due to the extra support they receive.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are interesting and pupils have lots of opportunities to work by themselves and find things out.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite, respectful and keen to learn. They feel safe and are very proud of their school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is shown in their high levels of attendance.
- The school motto 'a place of JOY and learning' is the foundation for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is well promoted and is helping pupils to become mature, responsible individuals.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders, including the governing body, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Actions taken since the previous inspection have ensured that achievement and teaching have remained consistently good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is not yet high enough, especially in writing.
- A small amount of teaching still requires improvement and pupils do not act on the advice given by teachers in their books.
- Leadership in literacy has not brought about sufficient improvements for all groups of pupils, especially in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 15 lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, a staff member from the local high school and an external consultant.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school and responded by telephone to parents request from a parent.
- Questionnaires from 14 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils’ current progress, leaders’ reports of lesson observations, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to other primary schools.
- All pupils are White British and speak English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be supported by the pupil premium is average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after). At Spinney Avenue, this only includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school hold a large number of awards, most notably Artsmark Gold and Advanced Thinking School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at Key Stage 1, especially in writing by:
 - ensuring early writing skills are taught well in Reception class and Key Stage 1, especially spelling, punctuation and handwriting, including the correct way to hold a pencil
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and in other subjects.
- Improve teaching so that all lessons are good or better by:
 - planning lessons which are set at the right level for all pupils, particularly the more able
 - ensuring pupils respond to teachers' comments and follow up the targets set as soon as possible.
- Improve the leadership of literacy to raise attainment, especially in Key Stage 1 by:
 - checking, supporting and improving how reading and writing are taught across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception class with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in writing and calculating. They settle quickly and make good progress because they are taught well and exciting activities develop their early skills.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics and attainment is rising. In 2012, pupils reached standards which were close to the national average. Progress in writing is not as rapid. Pupils' spelling, use of punctuation and handwriting, including their poor pencil grip, are not corrected consistently by teachers. Consequently, levels of attainment in writing are lower. Additionally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in different styles or in different subjects.
- Progress in Key Stage 2, in relation to their previous individual starting points, is consistently good and pupils reach levels that are above average. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen in writing since the previous inspection and is now in line with reading. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing has also risen and is above average. This is due to the high quality teaching pupils receive, particularly in Year 6.
- Reading is well taught in Reception class and children get off to a good start. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds successfully to tackle new words and become confident readers. Older pupils develop good reading habits and read complex and lengthy texts. They can express their preferences for different authors and different types of book. Reading volunteers and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to reading standards by hearing pupils read regularly so that they do not fall behind.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to the quality of teaching and support they receive in lessons, together with the extra help from teaching assistants outside lessons. They make similar progress to their classmates due to the extra support they receive.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well due to the effective use of the pupil premium funding. This provides additional adult time to boost pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and is successfully helping to close the gaps in attainment with other pupils. In English, pupils entitled to the pupil premium do not do as well as other pupils in the school, but in mathematics they do better.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils are treated equally and discrimination is not tolerated. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive additional support in school and those who are gifted and talented do challenging work at the local high school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in most lessons and outstanding in some. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use good questioning skills to check or probe pupils' understanding. Relationships are good in all classes and pupils participate well in lessons. Consequently, they make good progress and learn and achieve well.
- Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to investigate and work on their own. Pupils respond to this level of trust exceptionally well and manage their time effectively. They also use other resources, including the computer suite, sensibly.
- Where teaching is outstanding, pupils are very clear about what they are going to learn because teachers explain this well at the beginning and check during the lesson that pupils understand. Exciting and creative ways are used to captivate pupils. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils watched a *Star Wars* video clip and had to describe the feelings of the characters and the setting. A wide range of writing and thinking skills were needed, including note-taking, and every pupil was engrossed and produced high-quality work.
- Where teaching is less effective, expectations are too low and the work set is too easy for some

pupils. It does not challenge them to think and prevents them reaching the higher levels. Worksheets are used too frequently and this reduces the amount pupils write on their own.

- Additional adults make a good contribution to the progress pupils make by supporting them well in lessons and providing individual or small-group support with their reading, writing or mathematics to make sure they do not fall behind. This has been particularly successful for pupils who have special educational needs or those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and provide helpful comments or set targets to help them improve their work. However, teachers do not always check that pupils have acted upon the advice given and sometimes new work is started before pupils have had the chance to work on their targets for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are, as the school motto promotes, a 'JOY' to be with. This is because, from the outset, pupils are taught to value 'Jesus, Others and Yourself'. Pupils are mature, sensible and very polite. They care for each other and are highly respectful towards adults and visitors. They have exemplary attitudes to their learning and want to achieve well.
- All parents, staff and pupils who expressed their views agree that behaviour is a strength. A teacher from a local high school said, 'We can always spot a Spinney pupil because they have a strong work ethic and are independent learners. They often go on to become head boy or head girl.' Behaviour in all lessons is good and, at playtimes, older pupils are quick to help younger pupils – for example, if they hurt themselves.
- School records show that there have been no racist, bullying or serious incidents. This is because behaviour is well managed by adults and action is taken swiftly to address any problems which occur. Pupils also know and follow the school behaviour policy well. They understand what will happen if they misbehave but also enjoy the rewards and praise they receive for good behaviour.
- Pupils are aware of some of the different forms of bullying but are adamant that this does not happen in their school. They feel safe and secure and know who they can go to if they have a problem of any kind. They are also very aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet, as they are taught frequently about this.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. Pupils have time for reflection in lessons and assemblies, know the difference between right and wrong, respect and work well with each other and have good levels of understanding about different cultures and beliefs. They also value and enjoy their links with the local church, especially taking part in services at different times of the year.
- Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school and want to be there. They are extremely proud of their school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school effectively. Together with other leaders and the governing body, she knows which aspects of the school are working well and which need further improvement. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection and attainment in Key Stage 1 is now closer to the national average.
- Regular checks are made of teaching by senior leaders but subject leaders, particularly in literacy, do not check that pupils are making enough progress in all year groups. They do not take action to support and improve the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Targets are set for teachers based on whole school priorities and linked to pupils' progress. Pay awards are only agreed by the headteacher where teachers can prove that pupils make at least good progress.

- A wide range of other activities help promote pupils' skills and knowledge, for example, after school clubs, visits and visiting speakers. They also provide memorable experiences for pupils, especially their residential visit to Robinwood activity centre. Pupils have good information and communication technology skills. All age groups use these effectively. Art, sport and music are also given high priority and provide early opportunities to develop these talents.
- Effective partnerships exist with the local high school and this is hugely beneficial in helping pupils get ready for their transfer after Year 6. Key Stage 2 pupils visit the school regularly and a teacher attends Spinney Avenue to teach French. 'Family Links' are also an effective partnership and provide parent classes to help parents support their children and develop strong community links.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school as they rightly have confidence in the leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and support and challenge leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body meets with the headteacher regularly to keep a close check on things. Other governors attend training to make sure they keep their knowledge and skills up to date and to fulfil their statutory duties effectively, for example, those relating to safeguarding. Governors have a good knowledge and overview of the school, including data, and know where the strengths and areas for improvement lie. They are aware that the pupil premium is being used successfully to close the gaps in attainment for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils. They receive information about the quality of teaching and performance of staff and only agree pay awards where evidence is provided that shows that teachers have met the standards required.

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	111293
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	403146

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Sandison
Headteacher	Carol Lawrenson
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
Telephone number	0151 4244234
Fax number	0151 4202788
Email address	office@spinneyavenue.org.uk

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