

# Capenhurst CofE Primary School

Capenhurst Lane, Capenhurst, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 6HE

**Inspection dates** 9–10 May 2013

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

- While leaders and governors are increasingly rigorous in their management of teachers' performance, and while pockets of good teaching are evident across the school, the overall quality is not consistently good in all classes.
- The quality of marking is improving, but it does not always make clear to pupils the next steps they should take to improve their work.
- While the large majority of pupils behave well, poorer behaviour is not always managed and challenged consistently well. Records of instances of such behaviour are not always thorough enough to allow leaders to spot any patterns and nip them in the bud. In some lessons, low-level chatter slows down pupils' learning.
- Standards attained by pupils are not consistently high enough. They fluctuate year-on-year. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects are sometimes missed.
- While the majority of parents are happy with the school, some are not. For example, where parents raise concerns, it is not always clear how they have been resolved and if those raising them have been informed of the outcome.
- Opportunities to involve parents in the life of the school are not always taken. Leaders and governors have not ensured the school's website contains all the information it is required to hold.

### The school has the following strengths

- As a result of consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6, these pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The introduction of regular meetings between leaders and staff about how well each pupil is progressing, is holding teachers to account for the performance of their pupils well.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted well.
- Leaders have made good use of additional funding from the government. As a result, there is no difference in the attainment of pupils for whom the pupil premium is intended and other pupils.
- All staff are clear about the headteacher's vision for the school.
- Leaders' and governors' knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited six lessons taught by four teachers and one higher-level teaching assistant. In three of these lessons, the inspector and the headteacher evaluated the quality of teaching and learning together.
- The inspector met with eight pupils in a formal meeting and spoke with other pupils during lessons and at break and lunchtimes. He also looked at pupils' work in books and listened to six pupils read.
- The inspector observed the school at work. He looked at pupils at play and observed an act of collective worship in the parish church. He looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the achievement of pupils, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, checks on teachers' performance, and leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness.
- The inspector took into account the 51 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. He listened to the views of parents in a meeting attended by 24 parents. He also spoke with a small number of parents individually.
- The responses of nine members of staff to the inspection questionnaire were taken into account.
- Meetings were also held with five governors, four members of teaching staff and two representatives of the local authority.

## Inspection team

Mark Williams, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller in size primary school than others found nationally. Pupils are grouped into four classes: Class 1 comprising Reception-aged children; Class 2 made up of pupils from Years 1 and 2; Class 3 catering for Years 3 and 4; and Class 4 covering Years 5 and 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection in November 2010. Following a period of interim leadership, the current headteacher took up post in April 2012. In addition, in the last two years, three teachers have left and four have joined the school.
- The percentage of pupils for whom the pupil premium is intended is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Nearly all pupils in the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that the progress pupils make in their learning is as good as that found in Years 5 and 6 by ensuring:
  - pupils are given every opportunity to answer the questions asked of them
  - the marking of work identifies to pupils the next steps they should take to improve their learning
  - the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to present their ideas in forms other than worksheets so that writing skills may be developed further
  - staff follow the school's agreed steps to eradicate any low level chatter and disruptions in lessons.
- To strengthen relationships with parents, leaders and governors should:
  - make clear to all parents their high expectations of what the school can achieve
  - where parents express concerns, make clear how any issues have been resolved
  - involve parents more actively in the life of the school, for example, by seeking their and their children's views in the forthcoming review of the school's policy for promoting good behaviour
  - ensure the school's website contains all the information it is required to hold.
- To strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management, leaders and governors should:
  - sharpen their procedures for recording and reporting any instances of where behaviour is not of the standard expected so they have a clear picture of any patterns that may exist and can address them accordingly
  - continue their drive to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in all classes
  - raise attendance to national average levels.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 are not consistently high enough. They fluctuate year-on-year. Sometimes they have been above average; on other occasions they have been below. This is because small pupil numbers, as exist in this school, make comparisons with national averages difficult. It is also because teaching is not always consistently good across the school.
- Following national tests and teacher assessments in 2012, leaders were rightly concerned at the then Year 1 pupils' lack of understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). They were also concerned at the then slower rates of progress of pupils between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. These concerns are being addressed. For example, younger pupils read with increasing fluency, accuracy, expression and understanding. In addition, more frequent meetings between leaders and class teachers are highlighting well those pupils for whom additional support or challenge is required.
- Observations of lessons and pupils' work in books shows pupils are making progress in line with expectations from their different starting points. This progress could be better, as demonstrated by the strides pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making. In this class, pupils are writing complex sentences with increasing confidence. For example, one boy, inspired by the book his teacher was bringing to life, wrote, 'The giant water tower loomed over him as its rusted shape squeaked and creaked.'
- Writing is not always of this standard across the school, though. This is because there is sometimes an over-dependence on worksheets. This limits pupils' ability to express their often good and well-thought out responses.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils in the school. This is equally true of pupils for whom the pupil premium is intended; those entitled to free school meals, for example. Pupils with special educational needs have appropriate plans in place to support their learning. However, these plans are not always reviewed with parents. This means these key people are not always as fully involved in their child's learning as they should be.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The key factor why teaching requires improvement and is not good is that the low-level chatter than exists in some classes is not challenged strongly enough. This chatter disrupts and slows down learning because teachers have to stop and start the lesson. On occasions, adults and pupils talk over each other. The result is that often good points made by the teacher and equally good responses from pupils go unheard by some pupils.
- While good teaching is to be found in each class, it is not consistently of this quality. Teachers, for example, often ask good, probing questions but, instead of letting the pupils provide the responses, they provide the answers themselves. There are also occasions when it is not clear to pupils what it is they are to learn.
- The quality of marking is improving. The introduction of a new way of marking is understood well by both adults and pupils. Pupils value the clarity of the best marking which highlights what they have done well and what they must do to improve their work. Sometimes, though, the marking focuses only on the positive features and does not offer guidance to pupils on the next steps they need to take. In a very small number of instances, incorrect work in mathematics has been marked as correct. This has the potential to confuse pupils.
- Adults use a range of resources to make learning interesting. Good use is made of technology, for example to demonstrate coordinates in the form of a journey taken or to highlight to pupils the different sounds made by musical instruments. Importantly, these resources are used not just by adults; good use of them is made by children too. For example, Reception-aged children

used the large electronic whiteboard to successfully show to their friends how well they could write words containing the 'sp' sound.

- The great majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire were positive about the school's use of homework. Teachers use this well to extend the learning of pupils beyond the classroom.
- Teaching, and as a consequence, the learning of pupils is best in Years 5 and 6. Here pupils are fully involved in their learning. In a science lesson for example, the pupils had great fun investigating how light travels. Skilful questioning by the teacher and a keen focus on using the correct vocabulary ensured good understanding.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- A large minority of parents who responded to Parent View expressed concern about pupils' behaviour. While the great majority of pupils behave well, there is some justification in these views. This is because while leaders have in place arrangements for managing the behaviour of pupils, when it does not meet the standards expected, including for those pupils who present particularly strong challenges, these arrangements are not always consistently applied.
- Where low-level chatter is managed well, all that is needed is a look from an adult and behaviour improves. In some instances though, it is challenged less effectively and adults and pupils talk over each other. In other lessons, the pace of learning slows as lessons stop and start while adults ensure that everyone is attentive. Sometimes, even in the same lesson, while one pupil receives two warnings before a sanction is applied, other pupils receive three times as many warnings before action is taken.
- At break and lunchtimes, disputes can arise between pupils, for example, if games of football spill over into the games of others.
- Nevertheless, most pupils play well together and get on with their work. Pupils spoken with said they were happy to come to school. They say bullying is rare and if it does occur adults are there to sort it out. Those pupils spoken with reported how they felt safe in school. Arrangements to keep them safe meet requirements.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility. Some act as junior safety officers and help organise competitions that heighten the awareness of all pupils to matters of safety. Pupils get to put this awareness into practice in a range of contexts. Pupils know, for example, of risks associated with water and of 'stranger danger'. They also know of the need to cross roads safely, particularly important given the weekly acts of collective worship that take place in the parish church across the road from the school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is developed well, for example, through a range of clubs and visits. Pupils enjoy worship at church with the vicar and think carefully when he asks them questions. Their understanding of cultures other than their own is enhanced by their understanding of the similarities between boys and girls of both the Christian and Islamic faiths.
- Attendance is below average with no significant differences between different groups of pupils. Leaders continue to put into place measures to improve attendance, although, because of the small number of pupils at this school, the absence of just one or two pupils can adversely affect the overall attendance rate.

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Although the headteacher has made clear her vision to those who work at the school, this vision has not been shared as well with parents; indeed, a minority of parents are rightly of the view that communication between home and school requires strengthening.
- While the majority of parents who responded to Parent View were positive about the school's work, leaders recognise more needs to be done to involve parents in the life of the school and in the providing of information. A large minority of parents, for example, expressed concerns about

pupils' behaviour or were of the view the school did not address any wider concerns well, such as changes in staffing. While leaders have dealt with instances correctly, they have not always shared the outcomes of their work, where it is appropriate to do so, with those who raised concerns in the first place.

- The headteacher, her leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher, for example, has sought and gained support from a range of external partners, including the local authority, to pinpoint where strengths lie and what needs to be improved. This support has been helpful. Improvements include the sharp focus on the progress individual pupils are making. There is a gap, though. The picture leaders and governors have of the overall quality of behaviour is not as clear as it should be. This is because they have not been thorough enough in checking where instances of less than acceptable behaviour occurs so they can learn from these and redress any issues that might arise.
- Stronger aspects of leadership include an increasingly rigorous approach to managing the performance of teachers. Good support, for example, is given to the two newly qualified teachers. Correctly, teachers are held accountable for the progress made by the pupils in their classes. The arrangements for managing teachers' performance will only allow teachers judged to be good to move up the pay scale. The headteacher's view of the quality of teaching and learning is wholly accurate. The senior teacher presents herself as a role model of good teaching.
- Leaders and governors are promoting equality of opportunity effectively. This is demonstrated in their use of pupil premium funding. This has been targeted sharply on improving attainment. Whereas a wide gap between pupils existed in 2011, no such gap exists now.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Although more opportunities for pupils to write could be incorporated into the curriculum, it interests pupils well.
- Without a doubt, this has been a testing time for the school. Equally, without a doubt the headteacher and the governing body have demonstrated depth of character. Their honest and accurate evaluation coupled with the improvements made show they have the capacity to continue to make the improvements necessary.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body holds leaders to account increasingly well for the performance of the school and how, for example, the standards attained by pupils compare with other pupils nationally. It receives clear and helpful information from the headteacher and in the main asks searching questions, for example, about how the pupil premium is allocated and the impact it is having on the pupils for whom it is intended. It also has a clear view of the quality of teaching in the school. The parent governors are a strong visible presence in the school. On a very few occasions though, governors' questioning of leaders does not go far enough. For example, when asking whether or not parents were routinely informed if their children had 'time out' from a lesson, governors accepted the response that sometimes information was not given. Furthermore, governors have not ensured the school's website contains all the information it ought.

## 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>	111271
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	421782

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>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Antony Warden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 3392685
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