

Murdishaw West Community Primary School

Barnfield Avenue, Murdishaw, Runcorn, WA7 6EP

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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.

- Too few pupils reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Key Stage 1.
- Teaching does not fully interest all pupils. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to be involved in challenging tasks which stretch them, ensure they think hard and apply their understanding.
- Pupils are not always sure of their learning targets or of what to do to improve.
- Attendance is below the national average.
- The skills of subject leaders and teachers in using data and regularly monitoring the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils are not yet fully developed.
- Governors do not have a good enough grasp of the school's overall effectiveness, especially in relation to pupils' achievement, and do not fully understand how well the school's performance compares with others nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has introduced many changes and charted a clear path to ensure continuous school improvement.
- Together with a new senior leadership team, governors and parents, the headteacher is beginning to drive forward improvements across the school, particularly in reading and at Key Stage 1.
- The school's records show that the quality of teaching has improved this academic year.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They say that they feel safe, enjoy lessons and that behaviour has improved.
- Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved for all pupils, especially those who are entitled to support through the pupil premium, whose achievement is at least as good as their peers.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is better than that of similar pupils nationally.
- More parents are starting to be actively involved in helping their children to improve in English and mathematics, and say that they enjoy participating in family-learning activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons as well as small group activities, parts of lessons and the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make).
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2, 3, 5, and 6, and held discussions with two groups of pupils from across the school.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised throughout the inspection.
- Too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to consider. Inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views as well as discussions with parents. Questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff were taken into account.
- A meeting took place with the local authority's schools and settings improvement officer.
- Two meetings were held with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a parent governor and a local authority representative.
- Various school documents were examined. These included external reports, school data on pupils' achievement, minutes of the governing body meetings, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and performance management, development plans, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Dave Blackburne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is more than twice the average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is more than twice the average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is almost three times the 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 who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has recently opened a breakfast club and offers a range of after-school clubs.
- Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a number of changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher, the dissolution of its interim governing body and the appointment of a new Chair of the Governing Body, the restructuring of the senior leadership team and the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor play area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is good or outstanding, and in so doing raise levels of attainment for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that teachers adopt a greater sense of urgency in lessons so that learning proceeds at a faster pace
 - enabling teachers to share good practice in helping pupils to develop skills in problem-solving and applying what they learn in mathematics to real-life situations
 - ensuring that all pupils know their targets and what they need to do to further improve their learning
 - making sure that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - reducing the time that teachers spend talking to the whole class in order to give pupils more time to learn independently and work things out for themselves
 - ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to plan lessons which include challenging tasks and questions that stretch all pupils, particularly the more able, to think hard and apply their understanding
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in speaking in class
 - ensuring that when marking pupils' work, all teachers include constructive comments that show pupils how to improve, and that pupils are given time to respond.
- Develop further the current procedures aimed at improving levels of attendance, including those that involve the support of parents.
- Improve further the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - developing the skills of all subject leaders and teachers in using data to regularly check on the achievement of individuals, and groups of pupils
 - ensuring that governors have a good grasp of the school's overall effectiveness, especially in

relation to pupils' achievement, and that they understand how well the school's performance compares with other schools nationally.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are much lower than those typically expected, especially in language and communication. Progress through Key Stage 1 is improving, but is not yet good. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels by the time they join Key Stage 2, though improving, is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave Year 6.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 5 are making good progress, especially in mathematics. However, as in Key Stage 1, the most-able pupils in Key Stage 2 do not always make enough progress because they are often given the same tasks as their classmates and are not challenged fully.
- The school works diligently to ensure that there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls, and fosters equality of opportunity by providing books and teaching materials that are of as much interest to boys as they are to girls.
- Due to effective one-to-one support, good phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) teaching, new books, and new on-line learning opportunities, the progress of pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium is good. Their attainment is better than similar groups nationally. They outperformed their school peers in 2012 and there is very little difference between the average point scores of these groups during the current academic year in either English or mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting points and abilities. Well-trained teachers and effective teaching assistants have ensured that their performance is better than in 2012; that they achieve especially well in reading and mathematics, and attain more highly than similar groups of pupils nationally.
- There is good evidence that pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve as well as their peers, with examples of some pupils making rapid progress in Year 6 in reading and writing.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics has improved. It is now a central part of every school day and all teachers and teaching assistants take the same approach to helping pupils to improve their reading and writing. Pupils who read for inspectors said that they read often at home and in school and that they enjoyed reading.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although most teaching is good, a significant proportion requires improvement. No teaching is outstanding and none is inadequate. In the best lessons, teachers planned activities which interested and challenged pupils, giving them opportunities to indicate how well they thought they were doing and what they liked most about their lessons.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, with some pupils given work that is too easy or not interesting enough. Consequently, opportunities are often missed to develop pupils' confidence in important skills, such as speaking in class.
- The best lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers are succinct when checking pupils' learning, are clear about lesson objectives and what pupils will achieve. Such lessons involve all pupils because they are pitched at just the right level to challenge them and maintain their interest.
- In a fast moving Year 6 mathematics lesson, focusing on range, mode and median, pupils took great delight in reflecting on their recent visit to a theme park when asked to analyse data relating to the popularity of rides and the age-range of ride users. A sense of urgency was generated because pupils were given additional challenges and asked to do an 'eyes closed' thumbs-up evaluation at the end of the lesson.

- However, not all such practical problem-solving practice in mathematics is shared across the school, and not all lessons adopt such a sense of urgency. The pace of lessons slows when teachers spend too much time explaining activities for different groups of pupils to the whole class.
- Although their knowledge is improving, not all pupils know how well they are doing, or how to improve their learning. The vast majority of marking in pupils' books is up to date, but too few teachers provide comments indicating pupils' next steps in learning, or opportunities for them to discuss their learning.
- There are aspects of teaching in Key Stage 1 that are improving. For example, in most English lessons pupils demonstrate their ability to think creatively, use grammar correctly and write interesting sentences.
- This was the case in a good Year 1 lesson, where pupils were invited to select a number of objects from a box. Class members confidently described these items and together formed an interesting paragraph, using sentences such as, 'I will give the whales a leopard-spotted turtle, a red sparkly lip-gloss and a precious crystal' before working in different groups and using interesting adjectives in their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they feel safe and that they are not concerned about bullying, which only happens rarely. All pupils are familiar with the recently introduced system of ensuring good behaviour. They are adamant that very little prejudice-based discrimination takes place, and that if it did, 'there would be consequences'.
- Pupils are aware of safe and unsafe situations, especially road safety, and have regular visits from road safety officers, community support officers, St John's Ambulance and fire-fighters. School council members enjoy organising competitions to find out how knowledgeable their schoolmates are of safety matters, and peer mentors enjoy preventing disputes.
- Pupils know how to stay safe while using the internet and how to use modern technology, such as mobile phones, hand-held games and computer tablets responsibly.
- The majority of pupils work well together, but do not always listen carefully enough when their classmates volunteer to share their work.
- This was the case in a Year 5 English lesson, where pupils were asked to write extended sentences inspired by a collection of short stories they had been reading. Constant talking made the many good contributions difficult to share, especially for the less-confident pupils.
- The majority of parents, as evidenced in the school's own surveys, are happy with pupils' safety and learning, although some indicated concerns over behaviour, as did a small minority of school staff who completed questionnaires during the inspection. The school keeps detailed behaviour logs, which confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and are dealt with to the satisfaction of parents.
- Attendance, though improving, is below average. School staff, including the school family support worker, work very closely with parents and the local authority education welfare officer to ensure that good attendance is constantly on the agenda. The use of home-school agreements and the school newsletter has helped to improve attendance.
- Weekly celebration assemblies have enabled the school to have a sustained focus on attendance. During the inspection, Years 1, 3 and 6 were complimented by their classmates and awarded for achieving much-improved weekly attendance.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- In the short time the headteacher has been in post, he has identified what the school needs to do to improve and has made wide-ranging changes. Staff questionnaires indicate that the vast

majority of staff are supportive of the headteacher and the new senior leadership team in their endeavours.

- Daily phonics sessions have improved pupils' reading and writing across the school. Targeted support has improved standards in Year 2 and is helping Year 3 pupils catch up following their poor performance at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012.
 - Termly pupils' progress meetings are held and teachers have been set targets for small groups and whole classes to ensure that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics continuously improves. However, the headteacher is still primarily responsible for managing and interpreting data. The skills of subject leaders and teachers require development in this area.
 - The leadership and management of the quality of teaching have improved and there is evidence that a number of teachers have improved their practice this academic year. Teachers indicated that this improvement is linked to greater accountability, good training and development opportunities.
 - Parents are now far more involved in their children's education and regularly participate in family learning courses in literacy, numeracy and healthy living. Parents say that they are enjoying supporting their children in developing their skills through using on-line resources, including problem-solving games purchased by the school.
 - Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding is improving. The school has gone a long way to provide many opportunities to enhance the curriculum, including learning to play the violin, and through after-school clubs which include rugby, nature club and martial arts.
 - The school has recently developed a link with a school in India. However, pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity in Merseyside is not well developed.
 - The checks made on the performance of staff and the setting of appropriate targets has improved and is managed well; all teachers are set challenging targets. The school's pay policy is that promotion is firmly based on the quality and effectiveness of teachers' performance.
 - The school has recently been supported by a local authority schools and settings improvement officer to check the quality of pupils' work, especially in Key Stage 1. Support and advice are also given as part of the local authority's programme for new headteachers.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and have a broad understanding of some of the challenges that it faces, and how it has improved the teaching of phonics. They take advantage of training in order to keep abreast of developments, and are getting better at holding the headteacher to account. However, governors do not have a precise enough grasp of how well the school's performance compares with other schools or what the school needs to do to raise pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 1. While governors know that the pupil premium funding is used to fund a number of activities, including small group teaching, family support, music tuition and after-school clubs, their knowledge of the difference this is making to eligible pupils is still developing. Governors have a general view of the quality of teaching, having had sight of the information about the performance of teachers in the classroom as presented by the headteacher. However, they are yet to have a detailed enough understanding of the quality of teaching, because their involvement in the life of the school is underdeveloped.
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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	111174
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	412955

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graeme Halbert
Headteacher	Charlie Stanley
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2009
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