

# Arden Primary School

Osborne Street, Bredbury, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 2EX

## Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	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		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

- Pupils' progress from their individual starting points is not always good enough across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and their achievement requires improvement.
- Although improving, teaching is not consistently good throughout the school to secure good learning for all groups of pupils, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is not enough emphasis on teaching number and children do not have enough opportunities to use their number skills in different activities.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their problem solving skills and to write at length in a range of different subjects and contexts.
- The most able pupils are not given work that is challenging enough in all lessons.
- Pupils are not always given enough time in lessons to complete their activities and they do not have enough opportunities to work independently and lead their own learning.
- Leaders of subjects and key stages, some of whom are new to their post, do not yet have a robust understanding of the progress pupils make, this limits their ability to drive school improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together as a strong effective team. They have steered the school through difficult times and successfully tackled weak teaching. The quality of teaching is now improving and pupils' progress is getting better.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school well. They have identified the correct priorities that will continue to move the school forward.
- Teaching assistants are used well to enhance and guide the learning of those pupils that they support.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy their learning and they want to do well. Pupils enjoy school, are proud of their teachers and say they feel safe.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons and visited various classrooms for shorter periods of time. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior leaders, and teachers with responsibilities for leading and managing subjects and key stages. A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Results from 22 responses to the on-line questionnaires (Parent View) were taken into consideration by inspectors during the inspection as well as an on-line survey carried out by the school at an earlier date. An inspector also spoke with parents in the playground.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including: the school's data showing pupils' current progress; documents relating to the school's own view of its performance; the school improvement plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Pritiben Patel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Barnes

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British background. A very small proportion of pupils are from African, mixed and other heritages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. Pupils' needs relate mainly to specific learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- A very small number of pupils attend 'The Bridge' provision on a part-time basis.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is broadly in line with schools nationally. This is additional funding to support 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 school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Not all children enter the Reception classes from the school's nursery.
- 'Playtime Kids Club' provides childcare before and after school. It is run by an independent provider and is subject to a separate inspection.
- There has been considerable staff change since the last inspection. Five teachers are new to the school from September 2013.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring:
  - there is more direct teaching of numbers and greater opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to use this knowledge in different activities
  - pupils have sufficient time in lessons to complete their learning activities
  - pupils have sufficient opportunity to work independently and lead their own learning
  - the most able pupils are given work that is challenging enough in all lessons.
- Improve achievement in mathematics and writing by ensuring all pupils have:
  - more varied chances to develop their number skills and even greater opportunities to apply their problem-solving skills in mathematics and different subjects
  - even greater opportunities to write at length in literacy lessons and in different subjects.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders of subjects and key stages have a better understanding of the progress that pupils make so that they can have a greater impact on school improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The 2013 national test results for Year 6 pupils, the school's own pupil assessment information and inspection evidence confirm that progress made by pupils from their individual starting points is not always good enough in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- Children start in the nursery with skills that are below expectations for three-year-olds, particularly in communication, language, literacy and number. By the time they start Year 1, they are below expectations for their age. Previous staffing issues in the Early Years Foundation Stage have now been resolved, providing stability for children. However, children's progress, although improving, is not yet good enough to ensure that their achievement is at least in line with children in other schools so that they are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- The results for the Year 1 phonics test in 2013 (the sounds that letters make) are below other schools nationally. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve pupils' achievement. For example, staff have had training and pupils are now taught phonics in ability groups so that they receive teaching that closely matches their needs and abilities. School data and inspectors' observations show that standards are starting to rise.
- Weaknesses in teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, in the past, resulted in pupils not making as much progress as they should. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is getting better, especially in reading and mathematics. Most pupils make expected progress, but few do better than this. The most able pupils do not always receive consistently challenging work in all lessons.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading and mathematics, but well below average in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in reading writing and mathematics. Pupils are now given meaningful contexts for their writing, particularly to engage and interest boys such as, 'Superheroes'. In addition, pupils have increased opportunities to write at length in literacy and in different subjects. In mathematics, the school's policies have been adapted and pupils are given more chances to solve problems in mathematics and in different subjects. However, these opportunities are at an early stage of development and so have yet to fully impact on pupils' overall achievement.
- Pupils now have opportunities to read on a daily basis and there is specific support for the most able readers. As a result, standards have improved, especially for the most able pupils. The impact has not only been positive on standards but also on pupils' attitudes. Pupils are excited about reading, read widely and are eager to share and discuss their favourite authors with visitors.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively and there are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of pupils because their progress is checked regularly and those pupils who require extra support are identified and supported. As a result, the progress of pupils from African, mixed and other heritages is in line with their peers.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because their individual education plans, which are specific to their needs, are clear and they receive effective extra support with their learning. The leadership in this area is strong.
- The pupil premium funding is used to pay for extra staff so that eligible pupils receive additional support in their learning and this is having a positive impact on their achievement. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are two terms behind in their learning in writing and mathematics in comparison to those pupils who are not eligible for this funding. The gap is now narrowing. There is little difference in reading between these two groups.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it is judged to require improvement because there is not yet

enough good teaching throughout the school in order to secure sustained good progress for all pupils.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults do not place sufficient emphasis on teaching number and children do not always have enough opportunities to use their number skills in different activities in order to improve their knowledge.
- In some lessons, pupils spend too long on the carpet listening to the teacher. On these occasions, pupils lose concentration and their interest in learning slips. In addition, because pupils have spent too long listening to the teacher they do not have enough time to complete their main activity and so consolidate their learning. This slows the progress they make.
- Most-able pupils are not always consistently challenged in all lessons. For example, in a Key Stage 1 numeracy lesson, pupils were learning how to present information in a bar chart. The most able pupils found the worksheet that they had been given too easy and so did not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, pupils worked well in pairs and teams to produce writing that would persuade their peers to like the artist, 'Hirst'. They were in charge of their own learning and developed good independent skills. However, this does not happen in all lessons. Sometimes teachers overly control the lesson and opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners and lead their own learning was limited.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is improving. Letters and sounds are now taught more successfully and this aids skills in reading and writing. Pupils' books show that in mathematics number work is sometimes too mechanical and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their problem-solving skills across a range of subjects. Pupils' literacy books and those from other subjects show that they do not always have opportunities to write at length.
- In the best lessons, relationships are a strong and teachers set clear learning intentions which they regularly share, and as a result pupils are clear about what it is they are learning.
- Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach and this enables them to question pupils well and so enhance and deepen their learning. Lessons have a fast pace. This was seen in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson, where pupils were learning about positive and negative numbers, the teacher did not waste a minute of learning time, pupils' attention was captured throughout and their progress was good.
- Teaching assistants are used well to enhance learning. They provide effective support for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs enabling them to achieve in line with their peers.
- Pupils find teachers' marking helpful. They understand that 'Tickled Pink' comments are what they are really good at and 'Green for Growth' is what they still need to learn.
- Pupils receive regular homework which helps to develop their learning further.

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

- Behaviour over time is good and parents agree. Pupils with specific behaviour issues are well supported so that they are able to attend school and be involved in learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are eager to do well. However, pupils' attitudes to their work are less strong and there is sometimes low level disruption when teaching does not capture their full attention, for example, when they sit too long on the carpet listening to their teacher talking.
- The motto, 'Together we care', is one that reflects this school very well. This is a caring school, which includes all its pupils whatever their specific needs so that no one misses out on any opportunities. Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are supported well. The small numbers of pupils who attend, 'The Bridge' on a part-time basis also have their needs met effectively.
- Pupils have a good understanding about different types of bullying and they say it is not an issue for them. They state that if it happens then it is quickly sorted out by adults. There have been no recent recorded racist incidents. The high number of exclusions relate to a small number of

pupils who have specific issues managing their behaviour and the school is effectively meeting their needs and improving their behaviour over time.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have developed a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in different situations and understand how and when to use social networking sites on the internet and they know what to do if they are approached by a stranger.
- Pupils have a good range of opportunities to show that they are very capable of taking on responsibility, for example, as play leaders, members of the School Council or the Eco-Council. Older pupils lead the 'Wake-Up Shake-Up' sessions for the whole school.
- Pupils have strong relationships in school. They are naturally very caring towards one another. This was seen at lunchtime when a pupil was sitting on his own and two pupils went over and asked if he wanted to join in and play a game. Pupils respect cultural differences and learn about religious celebrations. For example, they learned about Diwali in assembly. They also have links with another school which is culturally diverse so they learn about modern day Britain.
- Attendance is in line with schools nationally.

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

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and effective leadership and have led the school through some difficult times. They have managed the unavoidable absence, due to illness, of key members of staff and the impact of building work which has resulted in pupils in some classes having to move around the school.
- Senior leaders have worked diligently to ensure that weak teaching has been successfully addressed. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils' progress is getting better.
- Areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. For example, assessment is now of better quality in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outdoor environment has also been improved and is used well to enhance learning.
- These actions clearly demonstrate the good capacity of leadership to continue to move the school forward. Parents have confidence in senior leaders too.
- Senior leaders check the school's work regularly and have robust plans in place for its improvement with clear timescales and success criteria. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The management of teachers' performance is robust. The quality of teaching is regularly checked and areas for improvement for teachers are identified if appropriate. Teachers are supported to improve their skills and practice.
- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and teachers are held to account for the progress the pupils in their classes make.
- The school does much to involve parents. For example, a 'Caterpillar Club' is run for parents and pre-school children and parent workshops are held in areas such as reading, writing and phonics.
- The Primary School Sport funding is being used to broaden the range of sports available for pupils. Sports coaches come into school to teach pupils and develop the skills of teachers so that they can lead sports for themselves. The school is also focusing on providing sports opportunities to involve and interest the older girls.
- The local authority has helped leaders to monitor the quality of teaching, have supported teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and checked on the quality of pupils' work.
- Safeguarding meets government requirements.
- The curriculum is generally adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, although more needs to be done to provide greater opportunities for pupils to write at length and use their problem-solving skills in a range of subjects. Pupils learn French and there is a range of educational visits for them including residentials, art galleries and museums. Parents have opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, for example, during 'Robotics Week' where parents and pupils make and program robots.

■ Leaders of subjects and key stages, some of who are new to their roles, want the best for pupils. Subject leaders check pupils' books and check teachers' planning. However, they do not yet have a full understanding of the progress that pupils make so that they can better contribute to school improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors bring a range of expertise to the school and know it well. They provide both challenge and support when necessary. Governors contribute effectively to the checking how well the school is doing and to the school development plan. Governors are involved in staff recruitment. They have an effective understanding of pupils' progress and use the Data Dashboard. They know how the pupil premium funding is being used and the impact of this on eligible pupils' achievement. Governors are involved in the performance management of the headteacher. They know about the quality of teaching and how the performance of teachers is managed. Finances are in order. Governors are reflective and want to ensure that they establish closer links with parents.

## 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>	106100
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	424595

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>	383
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Gordon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Haddock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4302675
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