

Grange Community Primary School

Brindley Avenue, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2EG

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Pupils' progress varies across year groups and subjects. Between Years 1 and 6, it is not yet consistently good and standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. This is because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good over time.
- The most-able pupils, particularly in mathematics, do not always have activities that challenge them enough.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to respond to the guidance on how to improve which is given in teachers' marking.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics and other subjects.
- In some lessons, learning is slowed because teachers' questioning and their explanations do not always make sure all pupils play a full and active part in all parts of a lesson.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility and to ensure that all staff are held accountable for pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a strong and resolute determination to drive further improvement. Along with senior leaders and governors she has secured improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and attendance despite significant staff disruption.
- More pupils are now making good progress across the school particularly in reading and writing.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the wide range of opportunities on offer.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups read, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management, including the arrangements in relation to safeguarding pupils.
- The inspectors spoke to groups of parents and took account of the 26 staff questionnaires. There were no published responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grange Community Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national 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 by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club which was visited as part of the inspection.
- Since the last inspection there has been significant and on-going staff change and turbulence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding in order to raise attainment and accelerate progress, especially in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics as part of work in other subjects
 - ensuring that activities consistently challenge the most-able, particularly in mathematics
 - consistently providing pupils with opportunities to respond to the feedback provided by teachers in the marking of their work
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning and explanations actively involve all pupils in all parts of a lesson so that their learning moves forward more quickly.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by further developing the role of middle leaders to drive improvements in teaching and learning and to ensure that all staff are accountable for pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress varies between year groups and subjects. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Test results have varied across both key stages over the last three years with standards overall at the end of Key Stage 1 being well-below average and at the end of Key Stage 2 below average. From their individual starting points, most pupils make expected progress but too few make better progress than this, especially in mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 has also improved but remains below average. The achievement of the most-able pupils requires improvement because the activities they are given is not always challenging enough, particularly in mathematics.
- Throughout the school standards are improving and progress is now accelerating. An increasing proportion of pupils are making good and sometimes better progress, especially in reading and writing. However, this has not been sustained over a sufficient period to significantly raise standards or for achievement to be good.
- The focus on improving pupils' literacy skills has shown an improvement in pupils' writing and more recently their reading skills. Although the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check is below that found nationally, pupils are making better progress in reading because the teaching of phonics is more consistent across the classes. Younger pupils are able to use their phonics skills well to read books. They particularly enjoyed the challenges of the active session observed.
- Improvement in pupils' achievement is strongest in writing. This is because pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to write for different purposes. For example, across school pupils were developing their ideas about the Shakespeare stories they are learning about. Pupils are also given good guidance through teachers' marking about how to improve their writing.
- Progress in mathematics is showing some signs of improvement although this is not as positive as it is in reading and writing. This is because pupils' progress is still too variable. The school has rightly recognised this and has provided additional resources to support the development of early number skills. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and to solve problems as part of work in subjects other than mathematics are too limited.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are typically significantly below those expected for their age. Since the last inspection, teaching and provision have improved across the Early Years Foundation Stage and children now make good progress. Even so children are typically starting Year 1 with skills that are closer to but remain below and sometimes well below those expected.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make progress which is similar to, or better than, that of other pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about two terms behind that of other pupils in English and mathematics. However, the majority of these pupils were identified as having special educational needs. School data and inspection evidence shows that the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils is usually not as wide as this and typically eligible pupils are less than a term behind. This is because of the targeted support given to eligible pupils and reflects the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Most pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs and the very small minority for whom English as an additional language make progress which is expected. School data and inspection evidence shows that an increasing proportion is making good progress in reading and writing. This is because support is increasingly well-targeted, especially in reading. Fewer pupils make better than expected progress in mathematics.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement overall, because although all teaching observed was good or better it has not been good enough over time to ensure that pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects.
- Pupils' learning in lessons does not always move forward quickly enough because teachers' explanations and questioning do not actively engage all pupils in all parts of lessons. A few pupils sometimes lose concentration.
- Marking in pupils' books has improved since the last inspection and pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work, particularly in their writing. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to respond to this feedback so that they could improve their work and learn from their mistakes.
- Although inspectors observed good teaching in mathematics, evidence in pupils' books shows that teaching of mathematics overtime requires improvement. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics or to use them in real-life contexts in other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and teachers usually plan activities that interest pupils and match their different ability levels so that achievement is improving. However, activities, particularly in mathematics, do not always challenge the most-able pupils to extend their skills.
- Throughout the school there are positive relationships in lessons and pupils respond well to teachers and each other. Teachers use working walls well to support and build successfully on previous learning.
- In all lessons teachers and additional adults carefully check pupils' understanding and pupils are encouraged to use and develop their skills. This is especially evident in writing where pupils use an increasingly wide range of vocabulary and understand clearly which parts of their writing to improve. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson pupils were improving their newspaper reports on the trial of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth showing an excellent understanding of what parts to improve and why.
- Effective tracking now identifies quickly those pupils who need additional support. As a result teaching assistants are now well deployed and provide a better level of support for the pupils they are working with, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, those supported by the pupil premium and the small number who speak English as an additional language so that they are making better progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Based on their learning about Oberon in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, children were excitedly making potions for the fairies, effectively developing their speaking and listening skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are considerate, polite and friendly both to each other and visitors. Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils say that it has 'got even better' because 'no-one wants to go on the consequence ladder'. They are very clear about what happens if any behaviour is not as good as it might be and that any incidents are quickly dealt with.
- Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that it happens rarely. Different visitors to school, including the anti-bullying workshops held during the inspection, helps to support their understanding.
- Older pupils take on the responsibilities of road safety and e-safety officers with pride and the younger pupils say that they enjoy the competitions which these pupils run.
- Behaviour records are carefully monitored by senior leaders and any incidents followed up thoroughly. Senior leaders also monitor in lessons and have identified further areas for improvement.

- Attendance has improved recently and is now average. The number of pupils who are absent for any significant period of time has declined considerably.
- The breakfast club offers pupils with a good start to the day by providing a healthy breakfast and opportunities for pupils of different ages to play together. This is improving some pupils' attendance and punctuality.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management overall require improvement because although the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is improving this is not yet consistently good across all subjects and classes.
- Significant and on-going staff changes since the last inspection have hindered the efforts of the headteacher to bring about consistency in teachers' practice and develop the roles of middle leaders.
- Middle leaders, many of whom are new to the role, do not yet check enough on the quality of teaching or the progress of pupils in their areas of responsibility to ensure that there is consistently good progress across all groups and to ensure that all staff are held accountable for pupils' progress.
- The headteacher's leadership is good. She is determined and resolute in improving pupils' achievement. She is managing the significant staff disruption well and has accurately identified the key priorities for the school and has secured improvements since the last inspection, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement in reading and particularly writing and improved attendance. These clearly show that the school has the ability to improve further.
- The leadership of teaching is bringing about better teaching. The headteacher regularly checks on the quality of teaching and has accurately identified areas which need improvement. Training for teachers has led to improvements, particularly in reading and writing and teachers' understanding of how to move pupils' learning forward at a better rate. However, the pace of this improvement has been inconsistent because of staff absence and movement.
- Arrangements for the performance management of staff are robust and staff are held closely to account for pupils' progress through regular pupil progress meetings. Movement up the pay scale is carefully reviewed and linked to national standards.
- The systems for checking how well individual pupils are doing are good. The range of special support programmes for pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning is helping to drive improvements in pupil's progress. Leadership of special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the many opportunities to participate in music, art, sports and extra-curricular activities. This is evident in the high quality of art displayed and the very well presented topic books. Pupils' writing is celebrated throughout school and interesting topics, including the focus on Shakespeare across school, excite and engross pupils. Leaders know that further curriculum improvements are needed in mathematics so that pupils are given more opportunities to use their skills to solve problems.
- Partnerships are good and the school's membership of the local cluster of schools supports both training and pupils' transition to the local high school. The school works well with parents, providing opportunities through both parent meetings and also regular coffee mornings to discuss any concerns. Parents spoken to were very positive about the school.
- The primary school sports funding is being used to employ a specialist teacher who is teaching pupils new skills, including successfully promoting girls football, and firm plans are in place to further develop staff skills to ensure sustainability. This is having a positive impact on pupils' participation and well-being.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority checks on the school's effectiveness and provides the school with a moderate level of support, through support and training.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are extremely supportive of the school and have a sharp focus on improving the achievement of all pupils. Since the last inspection, they have strengthened their effectiveness. They are now more fully involved in checking on the performance of the school through regular visits and reports by governors linked to specific subjects and areas, including pupil premium funding. They have a good understanding of the strengths and key priorities for the school. They are well informed about pupils' progress across the school and have an increasingly good understanding of performance data, including how well the school's performance compares to other schools. Governors have a good knowledge about the quality of teaching and know that pay progression is linked to pupils' progress. They have supported the headteacher well in tackling underperformance and managing on-going staff disruption, ensuring that any staff appointments will support the drive for improvement. Governors, including those new to role, attend training regularly to enable them to develop their skills further in holding the school to account for its performance.

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	111048
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	426115

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Healey
Headteacher	Hazel Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2012
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