

# Newton-le-Willows Primary School

Sanderling Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 9UF

**Inspection dates** 28–29 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Too many pupils are making only expected progress from their starting points and too few are making better than expected progress, particularly in reading.
- The standards pupils attain at the end of Key Stage 2 are just below average in mathematics and writing, and further below the national average in reading.
- The gap in standards between pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not is not closing rapidly enough.
- Teaching has not had sufficient impact over time to ensure consistently good achievement, especially in reading and for the most-able pupils.
- When teachers mark books, they do not always explain to pupils how they can improve their work further. In some lessons, pupils do not show an eagerness to learn.
- The school's systems for tracking, sharing and reviewing pupils' progress is not yet fully in place.
- Leaders, including governors, have not improved achievement and teaching adequately since weaknesses were identified at the school's last inspection.
- The governors' challenge to school's performance, particularly the impact of the pupil premium funding has not had sufficient effect.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn well and make good progress.
- Pupils' attendance has improved to be above the national average as a result of effective action taken by the school.
- In many lessons seen during the inspection, most teaching was good, and a small number of lessons was outstanding.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe and secure in school; they behave well.
- The school is on an even keel after a period of instability.
- In a short time, the temporary headteacher has created a united and strong team. As a result of this, staff morale is high.
- Actions put in place recently have led to improved teaching and achievement.
- The ethos of the school is pleasing and welcoming.

## Information about this inspection

- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the leadership team, the headteacher, and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- The responses received from 37 staff to the inspection questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of documents, including safeguarding documents, school improvement documents, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lessons observations and the school's records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Prydwen Elfed-Owens, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Melvyn Hemmings	Additional Inspector
Gary Kelly	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is considerably larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is much larger than 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- A very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving school part-way through their education is broadly average.
- There is a breakfast- and an after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- A temporary headteacher took up post in October 2013 and the school appointed a permanent headteacher in January 2014.
- The school met the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching over time to be consistently good or better and hence raise achievements, particularly in reading, by:
  - assessing the progress of all groups during lessons including that of the most and least able
  - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is consistent
  - narrowing the gap in attainment in mathematics and reading of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium in relation to other groups of pupils in the school
  - providing more challenging work for the most able so that they can make better than expected progress
  - ensuring that pupils are enthused and interested by learning
  - improving pupils' spoken English
  - improving pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that school leaders have an accurate view of how to improve the school
  - ensuring that the school's systems for tracking, sharing and reviewing pupils' progress are fully in place
  - making sure middle leaders have the skills needed to be fully involved in checking the school's performance
  - improving the effect of governors' challenge to the school about its performance, especially the impact of pupil premium and sport funding spending
  - undertaking an external review of the school's use and impact of the pupil premium in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because standards in reading are not high enough and are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- From their individual starting points, pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable because of the variable quality of teaching over time.
- Most children start school with knowledge and skills which are below the typical expectations for their age. They achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes because of very effective teaching. When they start Year 1, the attainment of most pupils is nearer to, but still below, age-related expectations.
- As they move through Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress. Even so, pupils still do not reach the standards expected of them at the end of Year 2, particularly in writing. However, the standard of boys' writing compares very favourably with that of boys nationally. Their attainment in mathematics and reading is just below average.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics was close to the national average, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, attainment in reading was below the national average, as it was the year before. The progress that pupils make in reading is not fast enough and this is why standards lag behind those seen in mathematics and writing.
- The recently introduced school tracking system does not provide sufficient data on the progress made by Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics during this term, to enable school leaders to confidently predict higher standards of attainment at the end of this academic year. The system is not sufficiently embedded across the school to demonstrate the progress made by pupils from their individual starting points across all classes.
- Pupils' knowledge and use of phonics (the sounds letters make) has improved since the last inspection, but remains slightly below average. Pupils throughout the school do not yet show a keen enough enjoyment of reading.
- The gap in attainment between pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not is not closing rapidly enough. For those pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding, the gap in attainment is widening in mathematics and reading; pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are over two terms behind other pupils in the school in these subjects.
- Pupils do not all have equal opportunities to achieve well in school because of the impact of the variable quality of teaching on outcomes for pupils.
- The Level 5 attainment of pupils who are most able is below the national average in reading and writing, but slightly above average in mathematics. These pupils are not doing as well as they should because they are coasting along in some lessons. The most-able pupils do not have to think really hard about what they are learning because the work is often too easy for them.
- The attainment of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below that of other pupils in the school in mathematics, reading and writing. The progress they make in their learning varies, and is stronger in Years 5 and Year 6 where expectations are higher.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time and currently across the school, there are variations in the quality of teaching from requires improvement to outstanding. Teaching has not had sufficient impact over time to ensure consistently good achievement, especially in reading and for the most-able pupils.
- Even so, in many lessons seen during the inspection, most teaching was good and, in a small number, it was outstanding.

- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to answer questions fully or develop further their speaking skills and they do not complete enough work, especially in writing, in some lessons.
- Teachers do not always set work for the most-able pupils that stretches their learning. Conversely, the level of support for the least-able pupils is not always strong enough and this prevents them from learning effectively.
- A minority of teachers set interesting work that helps all pupils to achieve their best. Where this is the case, pupils are highly motivated and eager to learn. In the case of the most-able pupils, the more that is expected of them, the better they perform.
- When teachers mark books, they do not always explain to pupils how they can improve their work further.
- In Reception, Year 5 and Year 6 classes, pupils were making the most progress in their learning because they worked together on tasks and supported and challenged one another. They learned new terms for everyday objects and actions which they found fascinating. In Reception, the teacher made the 'music and movement' learning fun and used it very effectively as a tool to support learning about numbers, letters and words.
- In Year 6, the science lesson focused on micro-organisms and their effect on illnesses. There was a sense of realisation and wonder amongst the pupils who learned at a very fast rate because they were so engrossed in what they were learning. One boy was very eager to announce that his aunt had suffered from the effect of a micro-organism which she had called 'a sickness bug'.
- In one Year 5 class, the teacher used skilful questioning to check the knowledge of a group of pupils about the features of multiplication. Pupils made fast progress in their learning in this lesson through the range of exciting challenges set for them. One pupil apologised for 'her rudeness' in relation to being asked to explain her work and progress. She said 'I have no time to talk to you right now. I have to get on to finish this, because I want to win the challenge.'
- Teaching assistants work well with pupils in most lessons and support their learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, pupils do not always show interest in what they are learning.
- Where teaching does not capture pupils' interests or imagination, they lose concentration and do not complete the work expected of them. This slows their rate of progress.
- Around the school, the majority of pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and towards adults. Most pupils are keen and show great interest in their work and the activities on offer.
- Parents feel that behaviour is good and that the school deals appropriately with any incidents.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe at school as did the parents who expressed their views.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of potential dangers, including using the Internet. They are aware of different types of bullying including verbal, physical and cyber-bullying, and what to do if it happens. Pupils report that when they raise their concerns about bullying or other pupils' inappropriate behaviour in the school with adults, it is usually resolved to their satisfaction.
- Pupils benefit from a range of activities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have time to reflect on their work in some lessons, know the difference between right and wrong, and have a good level of understanding and appreciation about other cultures and beliefs. They treat each other and all adults with respect and work well together in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour at break and during lunchtimes is orderly. The school is attractive, welcoming and tidy. The vast majority of pupils are well-dressed in school uniform.

- Attendance at school has improved since the previous inspection because of the effective approach used by school leaders to tackle the problem. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced significantly.
- Pupils take on many responsibilities in school and take great pride in their special roles. These help to prepare them well for the next stage in their learning.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not improved pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching adequately since weaknesses were identified at the school's last inspection.
- The middle leadership team has been improved well since the previous inspection. Middle leaders now have a better understanding of what constitutes good teaching through working with a range of partners, however, they do not yet have the skills needed to enable them to be fully involved in checking the performance of the school.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support to the school since the previous inspection.
- Where weaker teaching has been identified, it has been tackled effectively, although the inconsistencies still remain. School leaders are beginning to use the best teachers to coach colleagues whose teaching is weaker. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection but has not yet had time to embed and to ensure consistency in quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' performance even more rapidly.
- The faster rate of pupils' progress and improvements in attainment are the direct result of the support provided and changes made by the temporary headteacher who has been in post less than a term. In particular, actions put in place recently by leaders have led to improved teaching and better achievement among pupils.
- The school's system for tracking, sharing and reviewing pupils' progress is in its early stages. It is not yet developed sufficiently for school leaders to be able to track pupils' progress from class to class or to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning so that additional support can be provided to help them.
- Not all teachers yet have a good understanding of the levels pupils are at in their learning and how much progress they are expected to make each academic year.
- Leaders do not have an accurate overview of how to measure how rapidly improvements are being made or if they are consistent across the school. To this end, they have recently conducted an audit and produced action plans to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Leaders are working well together to produce an overall plan for school improvement which places the greatest importance on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- School leaders, including governors, are not sufficiently aware of the use of the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is also the case for of the impact of the primary school sport funding on sports teaching and coaching for pupils to enable them to develop healthier lifestyles. At present, there is no definitive plan for how the impact of this funding will be measured or checked.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are effective and all statutory requirements are met. The ethos of the school is pleasing and welcoming.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors' challenges to the school's performance, and particularly their regular checks on the impact of the pupil premium funding, have not had sufficient effect. They are, therefore, unable to challenge leaders well enough about the school's overall performance or the specific performance of particular groups of pupils. Their knowledge of the difference made by the use of the pupil premium funding is limited.
  - The governors have worked well in partnership with the local authority during a period of instability. They are working well with the temporary headteacher to develop the quality of teaching and to ensure that systems and procedures, including teachers' performance

management, pay and progression, are fully in place.

- The governing body meets statutory requirements for the safeguarding of staff and pupils.

## 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>	104775
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	430993

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>	489
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Rahaman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678390
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