

# Westminster Community Primary School

John Street , Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2ED

**Inspection dates** 26–27 February 2014

<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		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

- Standards are below average in Key Stage 1. Pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- The most able pupils do not always achieve as much as they could.
- Pupils' knowledge of letters and their sounds is not secure.
- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is not always good and some requires improvement. Activities do not consistently sustain pupils' interest and teaching does not always respond effectively to pupils' different levels of understanding.
- The school's strategic plan is too long and the key priorities lack sufficient focus. Senior leaders and subject leaders do not always make it clear how actions will raise standards. As a result, teaching and achievement have not improved fast enough.
- Governors rely too much on information from leaders and data is reviewed too late to enable them to ask questions that challenge what is happening in school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundations Stage because teaching is imaginative and makes learning fun.
- The number of pupils reaching the level expected when they leave school is rising.
- Staff support pupils and families effectively. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- After much hard work, attendance has improved and is now average.
- Several initiatives in the school successfully support those vulnerable pupils who find it hard to concentrate.
- The headteacher has effectively guided the school through a couple of years of staff changes. She always keeps an eye on sustaining the positive ethos that allows pupils to learn in a happy school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, the local authority and pupils.
- Pupils read to the inspector.
- Pupils' work was analysed with a focus on writing and mathematics in Years 2 and 6.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's strategic development plan, the checks made on pupils' progress, the minutes of meetings held by the governing body and information about safeguarding.
- The views of 17 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents shared their opinions with the inspector in individual discussions and informal chats as they dropped their children off at school at the start of the day.
- Thirteen responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

## Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The great majority of pupils are White British with a very low number needing help because they speak English as an additional language.
- A well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. 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 school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school is appointing a substantive deputy headteacher following a period of change in this post in school. The headteacher has been supporting another local school, although this has now come to an end.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - fully implementing the new procedures for teaching pupils their letters and sounds
  - checking that work is pitched at the correct level especially for the most able pupils
  - making sure that pupils have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems
  - improving pupils' accuracy in grammar, punctuation and spelling and their ability to write imaginatively
  - ensuring that activities capture pupils' imagination so that they sustain their efforts in lessons and produce their best work.
- Improve the leadership and management of senior leaders, subject leaders and governors by:
  - making the school's strategic development plan more precise, with closer links between actions and their effect on improving pupils' progress and attainment
  - ensuring that governors have clear and prompt information about the school, especially the data on pupils' progress, so that they can ask more challenging questions about the impact on changes in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The results of the national assessments at the end of Year 2 vary because of the small numbers of pupils involved, but were below average in 2012 and well below average in 2013. Standards remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there is an increase in the number of pupils making the progress expected of them and standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average, not enough pupils make good progress from their starting points. Consequently, achievement requires improvement.
- Results of the end of Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and their sounds) were low in 2013. New approaches to teaching these skills have been adopted with more focus on activities but during the inspection, the groups were too large for staff to apply the new methods and ensure that pupils became secure in their recall of the links between letters and sounds.
- Although in Key Stage 1 most pupils make the progress expected of them, this is not always fast enough and requires improvement to raise standards. Few pupils reach above the basic level expected of them and this is holding down overall standards in all subjects. The effect of pupils' limited skills in phonics is seen in pupils' spelling, although in reading pupils apply their increasing knowledge more successfully. They know how to break words down into smaller words and then blend the sounds together. Teachers ensure pupils have a secure base in simple calculations but they struggle when asked to apply their skills.
- There are more signs of progress accelerating in Key Stage 2, but this is not yet consistently good in all years. Standards are rising and test results and the work in pupils' books show the proportion reaching the level expected of their age is now broadly in line with the national picture. As in Key Stage 1, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in all subjects.
- In the 2013 national tests for Year 6, there was a dip in attainment in mathematics linked to the ability of this particular year group and newcomers arriving close to the time of the national tests. However, discussions with pupils as they work show a lack of confidence in explaining their methods, especially when they need to use several steps and calculations to solve a problem.
- Reading in Year 6 is average and those who read to the inspector read fluently and explained how to research information and also their preference for different authors. In writing, the results of the national assessment for punctuation, grammar and spelling were below average and this continues to be the case. Pupils do not always remember to use the skills that have been taught.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected for their age especially in speaking and their social skills. Teaching is imaginative and expectations are high. Standards as children leave, fluctuate because of the small numbers and the varying ability of the intake. Currently, standards have risen and many children now reach the level expected in reading, writing and numeracy and are above expectations in several other aspects of their learning.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement because it fluctuates between classes and when tasks are not hard enough they fail to make enough progress to enable them to reach consistently higher levels.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others. Those who have very specific difficulties often make good progress because staff are trained to provide effective support. Much patience and perseverance in lessons encourages them to try hard.
- There is no significant difference in the progress of those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils. This includes those known to be eligible for free school meals. Small numbers mean that standards in national assessments and tests cannot be recorded. However, the school's current data show that standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school welcomes newcomers and those who are very new to speaking English receive help in their own language whenever possible. This reflects the school's effective promotion of

equality of opportunity for most pupils, although not all of the most able pupils make enough progress.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Although aspects of teaching are good overall, it is not effective in ensuring that over time pupils make consistently good progress, and so requires improvement.
- Pupils' interest is not always sustained and some lose concentration and interest in the tasks they are asked to do. The school has adjusted the curriculum to try to resolve this especially for boys, with more opportunities to be involved with non-fiction texts and research. This was effective when pupils in Key Stage 2 used computers to locate facts about their literacy topic and other faiths. A good learning ethos was evident and pupils were quietly getting on with the task in hand. This is not yet always the case, especially when pupils' enthusiasm has not been fully captured.
- The teaching of reading is improving with a more structured approach to teaching letters and sounds, although this is not yet fully effective in raising standards in reading. In writing, teaching does not always grip pupils' enthusiasm so that they produce the more imaginative writing that is required to attain the higher standards. On the other hand, pupils are taught successfully how to write in different styles, such as a letter or a play script. Teachers do not always remind pupils to apply their skills in punctuation and grammar and errors in their work remain.
- Tasks do not steadily build on pupils' skills. This is especially the case for the most able pupils who often have to complete very easy activities before getting to the harder work. Work in pupils' books shows that too often tasks do not really challenge these pupils, especially to use their skills to solve problems in mathematics.
- It is a pleasure to see the response to the stimulating teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. On one occasion, a text called *'The dinosaur pooped a planet'* by Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter was being used. Dinosaur eggs were left in the sand tray overnight, and the eggs were used as counters for simple sums and letters written. The outdoor space is looking tired but is still used well for children to go on a journey to the dinosaur planet. Children very much like the staff and every day is a treat for them.
- Teachers focus well on extending pupils' speaking skills, with lots of opportunities for discussion and sharing ideas. This effectively extends pupils' vocabulary as well as their social skills, as they learn to listen to others and respect their ideas.
- The management of behaviour is effective and teachers and support staff follow the school's policies with a calm approach that makes it clear what is acceptable behaviour and the consequences of overstepping the mark.
- Marking often tells pupils how to improve, although evidence suggests this is not always followed up by pupils.
- Homework extends learning further with a focus on skills such as spelling and learning multiplication tables.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers follow the school's guidelines so that pupils know the consequences of their actions and most respond well and adjust their behaviour. For those few who find sustaining good behaviour difficult additional support is at hand and staff are sensitive to the individual circumstances of the pupils. They recognise that under some circumstances pupils are better left alone until they are ready to return to work with others. As a result, lessons run smoothly and most pupils behave well and settle to their tasks.
- Most pupils show good attitudes to their work and their books are tidy and work is presented neatly. There are examples when teachers point out to pupils that they have not done enough work and this tends to be in writing when they were not enthusiastic about the topic.

- This is a very welcoming school. Although slightly misinformed that the inspector was from the Queen, younger pupils hid their disappointment well and were very happy to chat and say how much they enjoyed school. They are polite and courteous and it was a delight to see the little ones working so hard to keep the door open for visitors.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Extra help from learning mentors and volunteers provides opportunities for individual and group sessions, which provide time for games and social activities so that pupils can share any worries and receive support. Pupils know how to look after themselves and are especially aware of the harm caused by smoking and taking drugs.
- Pupils recognised most types of bullying but were less secure about cyber bullying. The school intends to bring forward the time when this is taught in the school. Name-calling was raised as a concern by some pupils as was pushing. Records suggest that this occurs at playtime when the fervour for football takes over and some words are said and later regretted. There tends to be more use of abusive language than racist or homophobic comments and pupils felt these were rare in their school. Pupils feel all are welcomed in their school. Incidents are followed up and staff are effective in resolving conflict between pupils. However, the headteacher does not shirk the responsibility on seeing all are safe and when every avenue has been followed to no avail, fixed-term exclusion will take place. These have reduced considerably over recent years.
- Awards, weekly raffles for attendance and punctuality, plus contact with parents and stronger action where needed, have paid off in raising attendance. This is now broadly average and most pupils arrive on time to lessons.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Although the headteacher has been effective in sustaining a good ethos for learning during a time of staff changes, including the deputy headteacher, overall leadership and management requires improvement because actions have not been effective in increasing pupils' achievement especially in Key Stage 1.
- A comprehensive action plan has been drawn up by senior and subject leaders and this includes many aspects that the school is working on to improve what it provides. However, the document is very lengthy, including information that is readily available elsewhere. The major priorities for the school become lost in the list of activities, and the link between proposed actions and how this will accelerate progress are insecure.
- The role of subject leaders is not yet fully effective. Their action plans are part of the whole-school planning document and are not strong in showing how actions will increase progress and how success will be measured. Nevertheless, success is emerging. Based on an audit of the teaching of phonics, it was identified that sessions were not regular enough and this has been adjusted although other weaker aspects identified have not yet been fully resolved.
- Leaders have been effective in improving attendance and behaviour. This ensures a calm ethos for learning and parents value this for their children and the numbers on roll are rising.
- Senior and subject leaders follow a cycle of actions to check on teaching, which often include a focus, such as the progress of the most able pupils. These include an analysis of pupils' work, observations of teaching and a range of other activities. Most records clearly identify how teaching can improve, but as yet, suggested improvements have not been fully effective in raising the quality of teaching to consistently good.
- The use of a more robust system to track pupils' progress is raising senior leaders' awareness of where support is needed. The headteacher's approach to record this on a Venn diagram is successful when meeting with staff to discuss pupils' progress. This visual representation makes it clear which pupils are not making enough progress and explanations are sought. This relatively new approach is making staff more accountable for pupils' progress. This information and the quality of teaching are used to inform performance management targets. Salary awards are linked to the achievement of targets.
- The curriculum has been reshaped using texts as a focus in an attempt to increase pupils'

interest, especially that of boys. This is not yet fully effective, but has increased the use of numeracy and literacy in other subjects. A real strength of the curriculum is the number of visits and visitors. Residential activities are organised throughout Key Stage 2 and Year 6 pupils are looking forward to their visit this year because they do even more adventurous outdoor pursuits than they did in Year 5. These activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Pupils enjoyed seeing Macbeth performed and value their musical performances. Their links with a school in Uganda extend their understanding of different life experiences.

- The new primary school sports funding is being used wisely to enrich pupils' activities. Sports coaches teach weekly and staff observe and extend their own skills. New experiences for pupils include hockey, rugby and more opportunities to be involved in competitive sport.
- The local authority has assessed the school as one that only receives support if this is requested. Training is provided and this has been beneficial for the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors value the focus on supporting pupils and their families and recognise how this has improved attendance as well as the reputation of the school in the community. Governors work through a series of sub-committees that keep a check on all aspects of school life. Safeguarding is given close attention and requirements are met. Governors ensure the school has a balanced budget and that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the pupils who are entitled to it. Data is reviewed and governors are aware of the low results in the Year 1 screening assessment and in Key Stage 1, but this data arrives too late for governors to seek explanations or to challenge any impact of actions. Similarly, the lack of precision in the school's strategic plan makes it time consuming and difficult for governors to have a clear picture of the school's key priorities and how these will increase pupils' progress. Governors are more aware of the quality of teaching from their links with the school and review of the records of checks made on the quality of teaching. The governing body is aware that performance management targets are set and salary rewards given only when these are achieved.



## 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>	111086
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	440801

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tracey Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Finch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 338 2224
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 355 3797
<b>Email address</b>	admin@westminsterprimary.cheshire.sch.uk

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