

# Overchurch Junior School

Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 4NS

**Inspection dates** 8–9 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Standards at the start of Year 3 vary from year to year. They are generally broadly average and occasionally above average. Most pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are consistently above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good. There is a good rapport with pupils and there are high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils want to attend school regularly because they are keen to learn and they enjoy learning and lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also good. The care and support offered to pupils uplifts their spirits and enables them to progress well with their education in school.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has had a significant impact on improvement to the school in recent years. Changes and improvements have been made with careful planning and guidance enabling the school to move forward quickly in key areas.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development of the school and are very involved with planning for improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding; tasks are not always hard enough and so pupils do not always reach the highest standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Marking of pupils' work is not always of a high standard across all subjects.
- Middle leaders do not sufficiently check how well different groups of pupils are progressing in school.
- Pupils do not always know how to improve their work and their next steps in learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and different groups of people involved with the school. These included pupils, parents, members of the governing body, members of the teaching staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the results of the school's recent parental surveys, letters from parents and 27 staff questionnaires and 40 responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body and school policies.

## Inspection team

Faheem Chishti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Maloney

Additional Inspector

Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Overchurch Junior School is a larger-than-average junior school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is 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 and who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The current headteacher has been appointed in recent years following a longstanding headteacher of 24 years.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding to accelerate the progress of all pupils, especially in mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that tasks planned are sufficiently demanding, especially for the most able pupils, and allow them to get on with harder work as soon as they are ready
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply investigative and problem-solving skills in a range of subjects
  - ensuring pupils fully understand how to improve their work through challenging targets so that they know precisely what the next steps in their learning are
  - ensuring that teachers' marking in science and topic books matches the high-quality marking seen in writing and mathematics books.
- Improve leadership and management further by ensuring that middle leaders use every opportunity to develop their ability to check on how well pupils are learning in their subject areas so that they can take decisive actions to bring about further improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start this school from the adjacent infant school, with skill levels which are broadly average.
- Standards at the start of Year 3 vary from year to year but are broadly average. By the time they leave Year 6, most pupils reach standards that are consistently above the national average. Standards are highest in reading and writing where good progress is seen in these subjects across Key Stage 2.
- Reading skills are taught well. Pupils say they enjoy reading often and make good use of the recently refurbished and replenished school library. Standards in reading at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above the national average over time.
- Similarly, writing skills are well developed. Most pupils reach above-average standards at the end of Year 6 in their writing, which is an improvement over the past three years.
- The most able pupils, on the whole, make progress in line with that which is expected of them.
- Although in the last couple of years standards in mathematics have been broadly average and improving, standards of current year groups show that more pupils are on track to reach above-average standards by the time they leave Year 6.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium including those known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to their peers in school. However, in the past, the standards reached by these pupils at the end of Year 6 lagged behind their peers by about three terms in mathematics and reading, and by about two terms in writing. This imbalance has been addressed successfully by the school so that their attainment is currently similar to other pupils in school. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil now has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective support so that they make good progress. This is because planning and teaching are closely matched to pupils' prior attainment and needs and also as a result of the extra staff that provide additional support to groups of pupils. The school carefully checks the progress of these pupils, with effective measures in place to help those pupils making slow progress, and so they catch up quickly.

### The quality of teaching is good

- A broad range of evidence shows that teaching over time is good. This matches the school's own evaluation of teaching, including its monitoring of lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks revealed good teaching, with most pupils showing good progress in their work.
- Learning is good because there are high expectations of pupils and usually they are provided with interesting tasks that capture their interest. For example, in one lesson, pupils used mixing bowls, wooden spoons and cake ingredients to represent the ingredients that make up 'wonderful tasty sentences'. This led to interesting discussions and made learning fun.
- Learning is planned well and usually caters for the wide range of abilities in class. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, interesting and challenging mathematics puzzles were provided for some pupils while reinforcing difficult concepts for the less able in small groups.
- Activities provided for the most able, however, do not always allow them to make as much progress as they could. Sometimes they are held back while waiting for others to catch up, or not sufficiently stimulated by tasks set for them.
- The teaching of writing is particularly strong, with a good emphasis on the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spellings. Pupils have ample opportunities to write at length and enjoy regular and effective marking from their teachers, which helps them to improve their work. This high-quality marking, however, is not yet matched in pupils' science or topic books.
- The teaching of mathematics on the whole is good. There have been significant changes in the

way the teaching of mathematics has been organised in school, which has meant staff have developed their teaching styles further with positive results. There is, however, limited evidence of the use of problem solving and investigations across other subjects.

- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good because all adults, and particularly skilled teaching assistants, ensure that pupils receive support at just the right level to help them succeed in the tasks set.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to questionnaires or met with inspectors are very happy with the quality of teaching experienced by their children. They feel that their children enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. 'I can't fault the staff at all.' is a typical comment by parents.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a very positive ethos in school. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and that they like lessons because, 'Teachers are friendly, fair and easy to talk to.' This typical comment by a pupil is supported by the care and guidance offered by the school staff who are responsible for behaviour and pupils' well-being. The school's work on the care given to pupils has been recently recognised by a national award.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Great care is given to pupils who are vulnerable and have specific difficulties, and extensive work is done to engage with parents. For example, one parent commented that, 'The staff really helped me as a parent to cope with difficult and sensitive issues. They are always there for you.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including that posed by using the internet. Class assemblies make good use of video clips to highlight the dangers of meeting strangers online. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. They report that bullying and racism does not happen in this school. Logs kept by the school show that any misbehaviour is dealt with swiftly and appropriately by staff in a caring and supportive manner. There is a rigorous system of recording all dealings with parents as well as behaviour incidents. An overview of patterns of behaviour is still in the early stages of development.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. The school has good measures to check on poor attendance supported by good relations with parents.
- Pupils have a range of responsibilities around the school, which are growing and developing. There is also an impressive range of lunchtime activities available for pupils. Pupils are quite reflective of these and often make suggestions if they feel they are not effective. For example, one pupil thought that having door monitors during lunchtimes is not the best use of their time as, 'There's no reason for giving yellow cards to children when they come inside.'
- The vast majority of parents who filled in the online questionnaire on Parent View responded that their child is well looked after in school and that the school deals effectively with bullying.

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

- The school is well managed by the headteacher and her senior leadership team who have high expectations of themselves and the school. Plans to improve the school are effective in bringing about change, ensuring that all staff are consulted and motivated to improve standards for all pupils. As a result staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One member of staff responded, 'I am extremely proud to be a part of this team.' A positive culture for learning is evident throughout the school.
- There is an upward trend of sustained improvement as a result of effective professional development and careful monitoring of teaching standards. Peer coaching by groups of teachers observing each other's practice and suggesting improvements has had a significant impact in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The leadership's view of the quality of teaching is accurate. Lesson observations are carried out by senior leaders in coordination with a school improvement consultant. . The key features of

strengths and weaknesses of lessons is clearly identified and reported back to teachers so they can improve their practice further.

- Subject leaders demonstrate good subject knowledge and a good level of awareness of the progress of individual children. They have, however, a limited understanding of the patterns of progress of different groups of pupils. This inhibits their ability to raise standards and accelerate progress.
- The curriculum is well planned and resourced. It ensures that the extensive out-of-school visits are linked clearly to learning. Themed curriculum days, celebration events and the rich, lively classroom environments ensure that pupils are never bored with topics and curriculum content.
- A wide range of sporting, cultural and creative activities ensures that pupils have a high degree of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They have a good understanding of tolerance, empathy and the right to hold different beliefs.
- The school is well thought of by the local authority and so only provides the school with limited support as standard. However, the school pays the local authority for extra days to help leaders further with improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards.
- The new sports funding is used effectively to provide additional sports coaches and high school specialist teachers to work alongside class teachers to improve their practice. It is also used to provide extra after-school and lunchtime clubs, competitions with other schools, some resources and additional training in physical education with the local authority. This funding is used extremely well and the effect of this is seen in the high quality of pupils' learning in this area and in the number of sporting activities pupils have to choose from during lunchtimes and after school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - A knowledgeable and long-serving governing body has the relevant skills to provide sufficient support and challenge to school leaders. Members have up-to-date knowledge of pupils' achievements and have a good understanding of the key areas for improvement. They are aware of the progress made by different groups of pupils in school. They make good use of school data such as that found in the 'data dashboard'. They are aware of the use of performance management to reward good teaching and to tackle aspects of weaker teaching.
  - Governors hold the headteacher to account and continually challenge the school to do even better. By working alongside school leaders with plans for improvement, they are acutely aware of how well the school is progressing towards its targets.
  - Additional funding is used effectively by leaders to improve results for pupils, and governors measure the impact of initiatives well. For example, they have checked closely the impact of additional funding such as for primary sports and the pupil premium. Governors endeavour to keep their skills up to date.
  - The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

## 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>	105056
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	439514

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Peter Elliot
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathy Parkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 May 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6774150
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