

# Newton Westpark Primary School

Tennyson Avenue, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 5JY

**Inspection dates** 1–2 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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 make good progress. Attainment has been rising year on year and pupils leave school reaching the level expected of them in writing and mathematics and above this level in reading.
- Children get a good start to their school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills ready for starting in Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy learning because activities capture their interest.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly and eager to help. Staff care for pupils and they know how to recognise dangers and keep safe.
- A good range of visits and visitors broaden pupils' experiences and raise their aspirations for the future.
- Regular checks on teaching and pupils' progress are made by the headteacher and senior leaders. Effective action is taken to remedy any concerns. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving.
- The governing body is much stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. A rigorous analysis of data leads to challenging questions of the leadership team. Governors and leaders ensure that this school goes from strength to strength.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always write neatly and some make mistakes in their basic literacy skills, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils do not consistently have opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to solve problems.
- Activities do not always ensure that boys and the most-able pupils make their best possible progress.
- Subject leaders, some new to the role, do not make it clear in their improvement plans how actions will raise attainment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, the local authority and pupils.
- Pupils read to the inspectors.
- Pupils' work was analysed with a focus on writing and mathematics.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the checks made on pupils' progress, the minutes of meetings held by the governing body and information about safeguarding.
- Not enough parents responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to obtain an analysis of their views. Inspectors analysed a recent audit conducted by the school and spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day.
- Twenty-three responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

## Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

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 well above average.
- 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 and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Alternative education is occasionally provided in the Phoenix Centre, a unit for pupils with behavioural difficulties.
- The great majority of pupils are White British and no pupils need help because they speak English as an additional language.
- An above average proportion of pupils starts school at different times during the school year.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that activities capture the interest of boys and are always hard enough for the most-able pupils
  - making sure that pupils have enough opportunities to use their numeracy skills to solve problems
  - raising expectations of pupils' handwriting and increasing pupils' accuracy in their basic literacy skills, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that their action plans are focused more precisely on actions to raise pupils' attainment.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The results of national assessments and tests have been gradually rising at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils now reach the levels expected for their age in writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6 and in reading, their attainment is above average. From having well below expected skills for their age overall when they start school, pupils' achievement is good.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because a well-organised environment ensures that they feel secure. It is a delight to watch them select an activity and sustain good concentration. They make good use of many opportunities to try out their early writing skills and enjoy counting to 10 and beyond. Although not all reach the level expected by the time they start in Year 1, especially in writing, a good number does. All have a firm foundation to build their skills.
- Historically, attainment at the end of Year 2 has been too low. This has steadily improved as teaching has become more effective. Attainment in reading and mathematics are now average but as yet, in writing, it remains below average. Nevertheless, pupils' progress from their individual starting points is good.
- There has been some variability in progress between years in Key Stage 2 linked to the overall quality of teaching. This is improving and overall progress is good, especially in reading.
- The focus on writing imaginatively has improved pupils' ability to add interest to their work. However, especially in Key Stage 1, there are examples of untidy handwriting and some errors in basic grammar and punctuation skills.
- Regular sessions in mental mathematics have enhanced pupils' basic skills. Many use these skills well, but this is not consistent in all classes and some find it difficult to solve problems.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Phonics (letters and their sounds) are built on systematically each year so that pupils tackle new words confidently. The results of the screening check in phonics in Year 1 were slightly above average last year. Older pupils have preferences for authors and derive pleasure from reading.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall. The proportion of pupils reaching above average levels is rising in Year 6, with more aiming to reach the high Level 6 this year. Occasionally, these pupils are not challenged enough to make the best possible progress.
- Improving boys' progress has been a priority for the school. Data show that the achievement gap between girls and boys is closing and they now make similar good progress. However, not as many boys reach the above average levels as girls. Some boys are not always enthused by their tasks.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. Their attainment in national tests in Year 6 was above this group nationally by just over one term in mathematics and reading and two terms in writing. Their attainment is below that of other pupils in the school, especially in writing.
- Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The school welcomes pupils who have behavioural difficulties and they flourish because they receive support to help them learn alongside their peers. Occasionally, pupils attend part-time at the Phoenix Centre and records show good progress.
- Pupils who start at the school at different times make good progress because prompt assessment of their ability means they quickly close any gaps in their skills and move on to new learning.
- There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils of different ability and the promotion of equal opportunities is effective.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils' experience of teaching over time has been variable in the past, but has improved as staffing has stabilised. Recent changes and more rigorous checking on pupils' progress have led to good teaching and a more even pattern of good progress as pupils move from year to year.
- Children enjoy learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage because tasks capture their imagination. The outdoors is used especially well. When learning about three-dimensional shapes, one child spotted a cone and a cube, made a space ship and the challenge to make a big one was under way.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Phonics are taught through actions that help pupils to recall their sounds and understand the text. Many opportunities are provided for reading for research and pleasure.
- Mathematics teaching is strong with effective questions drawing out from pupils their method of calculation. When the school has special weeks, such as the world of work, pupils learn to apply their skills as they sell tickets and work out expenses. These opportunities to get to grips with applying their skills are less evident in pupils' numeracy books.
- The whole-school approach to teaching writing, including weekly opportunities to write at length, has improved pupils' skills to use imaginative vocabulary and write in different styles. Many older pupils structure their work very well and write neatly. However, expectations of handwriting and accuracy in punctuation and grammar are not always high enough, especially for the younger pupils.
- Much has been done to sustain pupils' attitudes to learning which were a concern in the previous inspection. Year 6 pupils enjoyed writing about their own super heroes and some choice of vocabulary was excellent. Occasionally, boys do not get on with their work enthusiastically and teachers do not insist on more work being produced.
- Resources are prepared well and lessons start promptly. Support staff play a valuable part because they are trained successfully and understand their roles. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively. Year 5 pupils made good use of the school's 'immersion room', which has sophisticated equipment to project images and create atmosphere. The video clip generated empathy with the emotions of the characters.
- A sharper use of information about pupils' progress is shaping tasks to match pupils' ability. Leaders identified promptly gaps in learning in the current Year 6 linked to previous less effective teaching. Additional booster sessions, especially for the most-able pupils, have accelerated progress. On the other hand, in some year groups, the work is not always hard enough for the most-able pupils and is completed too quickly and they do not move on to other work.
- A clear policy on marking has improved the comments teachers give to pupils to show them how to improve. More is being done to ensure that pupils respond to these comments. This was done very well in Year 6, with opportunity provided to review comments and for pupils to learn from their errors.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attractive flowers and displays create a peaceful atmosphere and pupils respond accordingly. They behave well in lessons and around the school. At play, they are energetic on the space hoppers provided and take turns sensibly to use the climbing wall.
- Pupils who have difficulty sustaining good behaviour are welcomed. These pupils are managed with patience and perseverance so that they do not disturb the learning of others.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. Most now try hard and answer questions eagerly. They listen attentively and follow instructions, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. At times, especially as lessons draw to a close, the interest of a few pupils wanes. Books show that a few pupils do not give enough effort to writing neatly and completing their work.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and discussions show they have recalled information about caring for

themselves. They are very aware about how to avoid dangers, including when using the Internet. There is a good understanding of bullying, including name-calling and the use of homophobic language. Pupils feel that this is sorted out well, often between themselves and their playground buddies. They say some incidents are pupils retaliating to previous incidents and find that the new system in Key Stage 2, where they receive points and a Friday reward, is tackling this.

- Attendance is rising and is in line with the national average, although data are not reflecting some unavoidable medical absences.
- Members of the school council are very proud of the pupils' achievements, especially in raising funds for others. They produced this summary, 'The school provides lots of supports for those with difficulties and nobody makes them feel uncomfortable. Every new day friends are welcoming, and we have opportunities to visit places and improve our talents, such as in music.'

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

- The headteacher has overcome successfully hurdles that restricted the pace of improvement. Staff have changed, leading to some slowing of the pace of improvement while teachers new to the profession learned the school's systems. Throughout this, the headteacher has stuck doggedly to improving pupils' behaviour and the reputation of the school in the community. Success is now clear. Staffing is stable and pupils' progress is rising. With good behaviour, parents are happy and numbers on roll are rising. The school is well placed to move forward.
- A thorough appraisal of what is working well and what requires attention leads to accurate priorities. These are recorded precisely in the school's development plan. Actions are clear and their impact can be seen, especially in reading.
- The checks made on pupils' progress are more robust and training on the recognition of National Curriculum levels means staff have an accurate picture of pupils' progress. This information is generally used well to pitch activities at the correct level, although at times the needs of the most able are not fully met.
- Teaching is monitored regularly and the headteacher has tackled weaker aspects promptly, offering guidance and taking firmer action when needed. Only a few aspects remain to be resolved. Teaching is stronger and staff respond to advice from well-focussed training.
- Teachers are set targets based on their performance and pupils' progress. These have become more rigorous and staff take more ownership of their actions when there is evidence of lack of progress.
- The impact of middle leaders in driving improvement is more variable. Some are new to their roles, and as yet are not fully involved in monitoring activities. As a result, future plans do not always make it clear how actions are going to raise pupils' attainment.
- The curriculum is balanced well. The weekly cycle of the assessment of individual pupils' writing and their mathematics activities, followed up with attention to weaker aspects of their work, goes a long way to making the curriculum relevant to pupils.
- Enrichment weeks, visits and visitors broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils speak enthusiastically about music, their residential visits and new experiences. Pupils working with a visiting artist were totally absorbed, painting a multi-faith piece of art to display in the school. These activities promote successfully pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents appreciate all the school offers. Several take advantage, with their children, of the opportunity to attend the weekly counselling sessions and others attend the toddlers' group.
- The new primary school sport funding is used effectively. The impact is pupils' increased participation in a range of activities and their positive attitudes to health and well-being. Staff learn by observing professional coaches. A side-effect of this funding is the improved relationships with parents who value this boost to their child's education.
- The local authority provides effective support, especially in strengthening governance. Termly visits check on data and progress towards the school's targets. Training, especially for those new to teaching, has been effective.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governance has been strengthened with new appointments. Governors have taken up the challenge to raise pupils' progress. Training on the use of data has improved governors' competency in comparing progress with the national picture and has resulted in more rigorous challenge about any concerns they may have about pupils' achievement and the school's provision. The 'Raising Attainment' sub-committee meets regularly and reviews progress in all years. Governors play a full role in providing extra support for small groups where their analysis identifies a need. A close eye is kept on the spending and impact of the pupil premium and its positive impact on the progress of these pupils. Contact with leaders and reviews of pupils' books lead to an accurate view of teaching. Governors are aware that weaker teaching is tackled rigorously and successfully. A great emphasis is placed on discussions with pupils and participation in activities, such as taking on roles in the recent World of Work week. Governors check that salary rewards are linked to teachers reaching challenging targets. The governing body checks and ensures that safeguarding meets 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>	106422
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	431663

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Hardy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vivien Birchall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 606834
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