

# Heswall St Peter's CofE Primary School

Thurstaston Road, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside, CH60 4SA

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher, knowledgeable governors, an effective and strengthened senior leadership team and very supportive staff. Together, they make sure that pupils are happy and well cared for. Teaching and learning continue to improve.
- All groups of pupils in all key stages make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years benefit from effective teaching, a good curriculum and memorable learning experiences. As a result, they make good progress and are well prepared to learn in Year 1.
- Overall, standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have been significantly above average for the last five years. In Year 6 in 2014, attainment in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling was high. This reflects good progress from pupils' previous starting points in Year 3.
- Good teaching and plenty of encouragement from adults mean that pupils are always interested and engaged in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together. They know pupils well and have consistently high expectations of them.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times. In lessons, pupils work exceptionally well together. They are very welcoming towards visitors. Pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning make an excellent contribution to their good achievement.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and their attendance is high.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, overall, is outstanding.
- Governors hold the school effectively to account, providing a good level of challenge and support to the school leadership.
- Parents are very supportive and are fully involved in the school. They acknowledge that their children are safe and well looked after.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make good progress in all year groups. Activities are not always well matched to pupils' varying abilities.
- The quality of marking across the school is variable. Good practice in marking is yet to be fully shared among staff.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching are not yet sharp enough to fully support teachers to improve their teaching practice so that teaching is always good or better.
- Leaders are yet to ensure that supervision at break times is as effective as it should be. The ratio of staff to pupils is not always at a suitable level.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Some lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior staff.
- Inspectors considered 133 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 23 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting was held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A range of school documents was examined. These included data on pupils' progress, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, the school's review of its own performance, external evaluations of the school's work, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elaine Maloney	Additional Inspector
Lynda Johnson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- All early years provision is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been reorganised and a new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed.
- A pre-school service operates from the site; this is subject to a separate inspection.
- A newly appointed early years manager, who will take up the post in January 2015, was in school at the time of the inspection. The deputy headteacher will retire in December 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups by:
  - making sure the best examples of marking practices are shared among staff and that all staff adopt them
  - ensuring that activities are always well matched to pupils' varying abilities, especially to challenge the middle-ability pupils.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management so that it is outstanding by:
  - making sure that pupils are always well supervised at break and lunchtimes and that the ratio of staff to pupils is always at a suitable level
  - ensuring that systems for checking the quality of teaching are sharp enough to fully support teachers to improve their teaching practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher who is highly respected by staff, governors and his peers within his local cluster of schools. With the full support of staff and governors, the headteacher has ensured that teaching and learning continue to improve.
- The headteacher is meticulous in his planning, particularly in relation to staffing. For example, careful consideration has been given to making sure that newly appointed leaders benefit from the skills of existing leaders when they take up, or even before they take up, their new appointments. As a result, changes in leadership do not impact negatively on the school's pace of improvement.
- The school's new curriculum is well on its way to being fully implemented. Workshops with parents, and discussions with pupils, have helped to ensure that all sections of the school community are familiar with the different elements of the curriculum. The school's current priority is to implement the new curriculum standards for grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils enjoy a wide variety of topics ranging from the Great Fire of London in Years 1 and 2, Ancient Egypt in Years 3 and 4 and incredible inventions in Years 5 and 6. All themes provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills across all subjects and to engage in regular homework and projects of interest.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well developed in this caring school. Pupils are used to collecting money for various charities and for those less fortunate than themselves. The school has a long-established and meaningful relationship with a school in Uganda for which it has raised funds and sent educational resources. Pupils have many opportunities to play musical instruments, including the violin, perform in the school orchestra, participate in residential activities and visit museums and theatres. Teachers help to develop pupils' understanding of the different cultures, traditions and values that characterise life in modern Britain.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is effective and helps to ensure that children with special educational needs or disabilities, for example, achieve well from often very low starting points.
- The school has a 'light-touch' relationship with the local authority. Most recently, the school improvement service has provided a mentoring service to support the development of the school's middle leaders. The leadership of teaching is good. All teachers and teaching assistants are well trained. They are set challenging targets linked to raising standards for pupils, and are subject to regular checks on their performance. The school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, including in the early years, are effective. However, systems for checking the quality of teaching are not sharp enough to fully support teachers to improve their practice so that all teaching is consistently good or better.
- Subject leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics and for assessing how well pupils are performing, make a good contribution to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. They do this through regular checks on, for example, the quality of teachers' marking, analysing data on pupils' performance and monitoring the impact of small-group teaching activities on raising standards. However, the best practice in marking is not yet shared with staff fully effectively across the school.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding its pupils and all statutory requirements in this respect are met. However, leaders are yet to ensure that the ratio of staff to pupils is always at a suitable level during break and lunchtimes. Senior leaders are aware of this and are addressing it as a matter of priority.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school exceptionally well. They regularly come into school to meet with staff, spend time in class and talk to pupils about their learning.
  - Governors know exactly how well pupils are achieving. They receive regular reports from senior leaders and are well aware of how the performance of pupils in their school compares with the performance of pupils in other schools.
  - Parent governors are particularly complimentary about the school and are of the opinion that behaviour is outstanding because this is what they have observed in class and during celebration assemblies.
  - Governors are happy to reward teachers for reaching their targets, but only accept the headteacher's recommendation for promotion if they are satisfied that teachers have been effective in raising standards.
  - Governors have a good understanding of how the sports premium is spent. They know that the consultant that supports teachers in developing their coaching skills is highly effective, and that activities such as cross-county running, judo, and movement and coordination activities in the early years, are all helping to improve pupils' health and well-being.

- Governors know that the pupil premium is making a difference. They make sure that all eligible pupils are able to participate in all aspects of school life, including school visits, and that the small-group teaching activities that they benefit from are effective.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They enjoy coming to school, their attendance is high and they display very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times, including when at play, during lunchtimes and when moving around the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in class is consistently outstanding. They listen to their teachers' instructions very carefully, and listen to and respect the views of their peers.
- Pupils enjoy working with their friends and helping each other. They are exceptionally welcoming towards visitors and are very courteous and well mannered.
- Pupils have an exceptionally well-developed sense of responsibility, and are very considerate towards those less fortunate than themselves. This is demonstrated in the fundraising events that they organise and in the money that they have raised for the school that they are linked to in Uganda.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time. They say that on the rare occasions when their peers do not do as they are told the first time, they 'always behave properly after that'.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well during whole-school assembly. This was exemplified in a celebration assembly where pupils listened intently, were eager to volunteer answers and showed a genuine appreciation for their peers as they applauded their smiley badge and ribbon sash awards for good behaviour, good work in class and for helping each other.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that bullying never happens, and that if it did 'the person would be seriously dealt with'. All parents are of the opinion that their children are safe and well cared for, as are staff. Inspection evidence, including a scrutiny of the school's records of behaviour, reveals that bullying is exceptionally rare.
- Pupils are aware of most forms of discrimination-based bullying, and are of the opinion that no one should be treated differently because of what they look like, or because of where they are from. They have a good understanding of cyber-bullying.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, when using computers and on the internet. They know they need to talk to a parent or a teacher before 'clicking on a link' and are well aware of the 'smart rules', which are displayed in various parts of the school, including in the computer suite.
- 'Circle time' provides opportunities for pupils to discuss safety issues, and for the school council to identify any concerns pupils may have about health and safety. Various visitors to the school help pupils to understand dangers and risks. Year 5 and 6 pupils benefit from the 'heart start' programme, which teaches them the basics of administering first aid.
- Leaders are yet to ensure that the ratio of staff to pupils is always at a suitable level during break and lunchtimes.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have especially productive relationships with pupils, and are very clear about the standards that are expected of them in class. Classrooms are bright and engaging places where pupils know where to find information to support them with, for example, their grammar, punctuation and spelling, and their mathematical calculations.
- Teachers are highly effective in bringing the curriculum to life and, where possible, develop links between pupils' learning and local history. This was the case in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class where pupils demonstrated an excellent understanding of the Second World War, including when it started, who British allies were and the significance of the bombing of Pearl Harbour. In addition to this, pupils knew that children from Liverpool were evacuated to the countryside 'because the docks were bombed and it wasn't safe'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils. Teachers usually set tasks and activities which are interesting and exciting and are well matched to the varying abilities of pupils. A high level of challenge for the most able pupils, along with excellent support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, results in their rapid progress. Teaching assistants play a crucial role in

supporting pupils of all abilities. Observations in classrooms and work in books show that, in the main, teachers get the level of challenge right, but not always. Occasionally, work for the middle-ability pupils lacks challenge, and this sometimes slows their progress.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils enjoy this subject and like to be challenged. In a Year 6 class, in order to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of fractions even further, pupils were given different investigations to work on. They were very excited to be able to find fractions such as  $1/3$ ,  $6/8$  and  $1/5$  after folding paper into squares and identifying the different parts.
- Pupils' literacy skills develop at a good rate as a result of good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure that pupils work well together when discussing their learning and ideas for writing. This was shown in Year 1, where pupils made good progress in using verbs and conjunctions in their sentences, and in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class where pupils worked exceptionally well together while writing their 'story openers'. Pupils have many opportunities to use their writing skills across a number of curriculum subjects, especially in Years 5 and 6. In religious education, for example, pupils regularly write detailed accounts of the main world faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam.
- Pupils are continually encouraged to read and to get enjoyment from books. This, along with effective teaching of phonics, ensures they make good progress.
- Most pupils know what to do to improve their learning. They know where to find their individual targets, and regularly spend time reading their teachers' comments and improving their work as a result. However, the quality of marking is variable. Some marking is exemplary but this best practice is yet to be fully shared across the school to ensure that all staff adopt it. Teachers do not always check closely enough to see if pupils have improved their written work and mathematical understanding. Sometimes, misunderstandings go unchecked and, as a result, achievement is not as good as it could be in some year groups.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups across the school. For several years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics overall at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 has been significantly above average. Pupils leave at the end of Year 6 very well prepared for their learning at secondary school.
- Children enter Reception with levels of skill and knowledge that are generally in line with those typical for their age. The good teaching that they receive, coupled with their interesting and engaging curriculum, ensures that most children in the early years make at least good progress. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are already working at above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of the good teaching they receive during their time in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2. In Year 6 in 2014, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was particularly high, with a well above average proportion reaching the higher Level 5. The proportion attaining the highest possible level, Level 6, in mathematics and in punctuation, grammar and spelling was also well above average. This represents good achievement from pupils' previously above-average starting points at the start of Year 3. Good teaching evident in Key Stage 2 reflects the good progress of current pupils.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (linking letters and sounds) have been about average for the last two years. The minority of pupils who did not meet the expected standard are very well supported in Year 2 so that they catch up with others and make good progress overall.
- Pupils read regularly with confidence, fluency and enjoyment. Those who read for inspectors read widely and often. Avid readers are familiar with the works of several authors from their own, and the school's library. Less able readers are skilled at sounding out and reading unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' progress in writing is usually good. In some year groups, including in Years 3, 5 and 6, it is outstanding. This is because of teachers' exceptionally high expectations, and the many opportunities that pupils have to practise and extend their writing skills.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. In Year 6 in 2014, the proportion of pupils making good progress was above average. The school's own data show that currently most pupils are making at least good progress in this subject across most year groups.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are very well cared for by all staff. Provision is exceptionally well managed by a highly capable and well-trained special educational needs coordinator. Pupils acquire knowledge very quickly and make excellent progress from often very low starting points.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils at the school for an analysis of their progress and attainment data

to generate meaningful statistics. However, a study of the school's test results, assessment data and pupils' work confirm that all pupils are making at least good progress in all year groups.

- The most able pupils achieve well and make outstanding progress. The school has many very able pupils who enjoy presenting their work to their peers and relish being constantly challenged. The school's partnership with the local high school has provided many opportunities for pupils to be challenged even further. As a result of this additional work, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 6 in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was well above average.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children enter Reception with the skills and abilities that are generally in line with those typical for their age. Children's learning gets off to a good start because they are well cared for and well taught. Most children make at least good progress. An above-average proportion achieves a good level of development, particularly the girls. Children are well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Children soon settle into Reception and behave well. They enjoy working, learning and playing together, quickly becoming familiar with routines, such as getting ready for playing outdoors and taking their turn to share their learning with their peers.
- Children benefit from well-resourced and stimulating activities, both indoors and in the outside areas, and from the support of well trained teachers and teaching assistants. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. For example, children were engaged in different activities linked to measuring water in containers of different lengths and widths. After discussing what they had learned, their teacher asked, 'What does capacity mean?' Several children indicated that it is the amount that something holds.
- Some children have advanced mathematics skills. This was exemplified as they searched for different geometric shapes, accurately creating a tally of the numbers of stars, circles, squares and rectangles found.
- Highly effective systems for monitoring how well children are doing enable staff to focus on developing those areas of learning where achievement is weaker, for example, the speaking skills and the personal, social and emotional development of boys.
- Staff have excellent relationships with parents, who are encouraged to participate in their children's learning at school and to share what they learn at home. Parents are happy that their children are safe and well cared for. They are appreciative of the good communication with the school and the information they regularly receive on their children's progress.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Since the previous inspection, changes to the layout of the two Reception classes, which are now joined, have improved access to a wider range of learning activities. The current early years team are working closely with the new early years leader to make sure that further changes are made in order to ensure that children can work together with their friends, on their own and with the support of adults to fully benefit from all learning areas.

## 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>	105079
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	448285

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	312
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Street
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Penn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 342 2556
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 342 7940
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