

Netherton Moss Primary School

Swifts Lane, Netherton, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 3RU

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- Progress is good and pupils leave school reaching the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school deserves its good reputation for supporting pupils with special educational needs. They are helped sensitively and make good progress in their social development, as well as extending their academic skills.
- Provision for children in the early years is effective; they settle happily and make good progress.
- Overall, teaching is good. Imaginative activities often lead to pupils becoming engrossed in their learning.
- This is a welcoming and happy school. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite and friendly. They say they feel safe and know staff are always at hand to help them.
- The many links with other schools and agencies enhance teachers' skills and expand pupils' opportunities for effective learning. The focus on raising pupils' aspirations for the future is high.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting. Whole-school topics unite pupils as they all learn about the same, albeit at different levels. Examples of the outcomes are often of very high quality, showing strengths in many subjects.
- The headteacher has secured a strong team of leaders, teachers and support staff. Close checks on teaching and pupils' progress lead to an accurate view of how well the school is doing and where it could do better. Actions are prompt and teaching and achievement are improving securely.
- Governors carry out their duties in a very organised manner and ensure the school goes from strength to strength.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Key Stage 1, attainment in writing and reading, although much improved, is not yet high enough.
- Teachers do not always set work at the correct level for pupils, especially the most able. Teachers often write comments to improve pupils' work but do not always ensure pupils respond to them.
- Some governors do not have a full view of what is happening in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes and in small groups throughout the school.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised with a focus on early years, writing and mathematics.
- A range of documents was evaluated including the school's improvement plan, subject action plan, data on pupils' progress, the minutes of meetings held by the governing body and information about safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own audit of parents' views and also spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at school.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school throughout the school year is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor target, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- Children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has had a new headteacher and several new members of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment even further in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 by:
 - extending pupils' skills to write imaginatively with more accurate spelling
 - ensuring that when pupils are reading books and instructions in lessons, they always fully understand what they have read.
- Improve the quality of teaching even further by:
 - ensuring tasks are always pitched at the correct level for pupils, especially for the most able
 - checking that pupils respond to the comments that teachers write in their books when marking their work.
- Improve governance by embedding the improvement plan drawn up by governors so that they see more of the school at work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and other leaders form a strong team and demonstrate a fervent determination to further improve the school. Staff and governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation which provides an accurate overview of the school's strengths and the aspects that can be improved. As a result, all are committed to tackling the school's priorities. This ensures the school continues to move forward.
- Leaders track closely the achievement of pupils. Staff are already becoming adept at using a new system of assessing without using the previous National Curriculum levels. Data are used effectively to provide for any pupils at risk of falling behind and also to check on the school's overall performance. Additional support, often in small groups or extra teaching, is provided and monitored closely to check the impact on pupils' progress.
- The pupil premium is used prudently to fund extra support. Additional staffing has been paramount in the extra help available. This ensures the school promotes equality of opportunity effectively. Although at times the most able pupils do not make the best progress overall, there is no significant difference in the progress of various groups of pupils. This is a school where discrimination is tackled head-on and good relationships are most important.
- The quality of teaching is assessed via observing lessons, formally and informally, reviewing pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Middle leaders are involved in these activities and this enables them to lead their subjects effectively. They carry out regular audits and identify priorities for their subjects. All have played a role in implementing the new changes to the curriculum. By working in different classes, staff share their expertise and this enhances their skills. Teaching is improving and only a few less strong aspects remain.
- Information from evaluation of teachers' performance and pupils' progress is used effectively to set teachers targets for improvement. Staff come prepared to meetings to discuss the progress of pupils and provide reasons for any dips and actions to remedy these. Salary awards are linked closely to performance.
- The school's improvement plan includes precise and accurate priorities. Its success is seen very clearly in the improvement in attendance which, after several years of being low, is now very close to average. The effectiveness of other priorities is not as easy to measure because data are not always being used effectively to identify success. This is more effective in English, mathematics and the early years where more information on progress is available. The changes to assessment systems are starting to provide more guidance on progress in other subjects.
- Leaders ensure the curriculum extends pupils' horizons and raises their aspirations. Past pupils visit to talk about their experiences at university and involvement in different projects and inspire pupils to look to the next stages of their education. Topics are imaginative and produce some amazing outcomes. The school performances, often written by the pupils, are a highlight of the school year. Numeracy and literacy skills, alongside technology and performing arts, are promoted successfully across subjects.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are more aware of other faiths and cultures and respect the views of others. Older pupils follow the national news and debate issues such as the Ebola crisis, and recognise their role in supporting others. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils look forward to the many clubs and visits that extend their skills and knowledge. The primary school sport funding has promoted successfully the range of activities available including hockey, dance and archery. The amazing display of trophies shows success in several competitions. Staff observe professional coaches and so increase their own teaching skills.
- Although the response to Parent View was limited, the school's own audit was very positive with 100% of replies stating they would recommend the school to others. Parents are kept well informed about events and feel able to approach the school with many issues, both related to school and wider concerns.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. Staff are trained in their role to watch for any concerns and know the procedures they need to follow.
- The local authority provides effective support. Training has been helpful and the local authority has helped leaders and managers gain an accurate overview of the school's performance. Advice about safety is appreciated by the staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Overall, the governance of the school is effective. The Chair of the Governing Body has moved the governors forward, leading by example by being a regular visitor to the school. An audit of experience has been carried out and a governor improvement plan drawn up, showing how more governors can

follow the Chair of the Governing Body's lead to extend their involvement in school. Nevertheless, governors carry out their role in an organised and conscientious manner. They check diligently on safety and the school's budget. They know that the pupil premium is having a positive impact on the progress of eligible pupils. Governors review data about pupils' achievement and are clear about the dip in Key Stage 1 in 2014, and the reasons behind this. They have an insight into the quality of teaching from detailed information from the headteacher, although not always based on first-hand evidence. They check that staff have targets to meet and are aware that salary rewards are only earned when targets are reached.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is a busy and happy school leaving pupils limited time or desire to misbehave. At play, pupils are energetic. They love football and other small games. Resources are shared amicably and pupils abide by the instructions provided by staff.
- In lessons, the majority behave well and try hard to be involved and do their best work. At times, pupils are slow to settle or behaviour wanes. Evidence in pupils' books shows that presentation is not always given enough attention. This is sometimes linked to activities that do not engage their interest. When older pupils are challenged, especially in mathematics, attitudes to learning are excellent as they strive to demonstrate their numeracy skills.
- Topics covering the impact of famous people on the world underpin the older pupils' understanding of fairness and, as a group, they declared 'their role in making the world more peaceful'. They discussed human rights and freedom following their study of the life of Martin Luther King. Involvement in fund raising and helping others enable pupils to gain the skills needed to live in a community.
- Pupils respect the many vibrant displays that create an environment conducive to learning. The display of First World War has created a spiritual atmosphere with life-size drawings of soldiers under the heading, 'Come on boys before it's too late'.
- Pupils show their increasing enjoyment of school in the improvement in attendance. Rigorous procedures to raise attendance are at last paying off and it is now close to average. The persistent absence evident in the past has now been virtually eradicated.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are very clear about whom they would approach if they had any worries.
- Pupils learn about the potential dangers of drugs and other harmful substances. Visitors and talks in assemblies and lessons provide essential information about safety. Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to avoid possible dangers, including in the case of being approached by strangers.
- Pupils are well aware of what constitutes bullying, including cyber-bullying. They know the hazards that the internet can cause and staff ensure that there are blocks on any unsuitable sites. Pupils identify some name calling that is hurtful to some pupils but consider this very rarely happens because most pupils in the school are friends.
- A group of pupils collaborated over the following quotation to describe their school: 'This is a happy school because everyone is friends; we feel safe, win lots of awards and enjoy school plays and parties'.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Observation of teaching, analysis of pupils' progress and a review of their work indicate that overall teaching is good. Staff share their expertise and skills effectively so that all move forward and improve their performance.
- Visitors instantly recognise a school where teachers value pupils' work. Displays are everywhere, creating a colourful and exciting ethos that makes pupils feel valued and eager to learn. Many prompts are also on show and pupils refer to these as they work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to ask probing questions that make pupils think carefully before they answer.
- Interesting activities usually capture pupils' interest. The interactive whiteboard is used successfully to clarify points, such as 'capacity' for older pupils. Year 6 extended not only their culinary skills but also their

knowledge of healthy eating as they made cottage pie.

- Overall, assessment information is used correctly to match work to pupils' needs. This works well for most pupils, especially for the older ones when years are mixed according to their ability for mathematics and English, and for the younger ones when grouped for sessions teaching phonics (letters and their sounds). This allows teachers to pitch work more accurately to pupils' abilities. However, occasionally the lower-attaining pupils struggle with some work and the most able particularly are not always challenged enough; this slows their learning and progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and for older pupils often better where the challenge is very high. Teachers' subject knowledge is detailed with questions drawing out from pupils their favourite methods of calculations. Older pupils grasped the complicated difference between mean, mode and range, especially when a simple rhyme was provided to make it so much easier.
- Reading is taught successfully starting with the effective teaching of phonics. Tasks are practical and sessions enjoyable. The same sounds and blends are presented in different ways and this repetition consolidates learning very well. However, at times, pupils are given instructions in their books or written targets which are too hard for them and this restricts their reading for understanding.
- Although writing is usually taught well, it is not always as strong as other subjects. The use of some worksheets, especially in science books, limits pupils' opportunities to come up with their own ideas and practise their skills. Partner discussions are used well to encourage the sharing of ideas but pupils often lack the vocabulary to be imaginative in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers mark work regularly. An effective feature in lessons is the use of checklists that allow pupils to assess for themselves if they have included all that is needed to be successful in their tasks. Teachers often include comments in their marking or set additional spellings if errors have occurred. However, pupils do not consistently respond to these and so do not always learn from their mistakes.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment often fluctuates because of the size of the cohort and the number of newcomers. These pupils often have gaps in their learning because of changing schools and have not always had the same quality of education as those who have been at Netherton Moss for all of their education. Nevertheless, records and inspection evidence indicate that progress overall is good from pupils' individual starting points. Progress is increasing as pupils attend more regularly and accelerates in Key Stage 2 with pockets of excellence, especially in mathematics.
- Children start in Year 1 at levels that are generally lower than what is typical for their age and are therefore not fully ready for some aspects of the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Staff plan for these needs by ensuring that opportunities to learn through activity and role play continue. Progress is good in mathematics, and pupils close the gap in their skills and reach the level expected in Year 2. Although progress in reading and writing is improving with an increase in the proportion making the progress expected of them, few make better progress than this and attainment in reading and writing is below average. However, attainment is considerably higher than the results of national assessments in 2014, which were due to a very small cohort containing a significant number of newcomers. Staff are working hard to improve the attainment of these pupils now they are in Year 3.
- Progress is good in Key Stage 2 and data show some rapid progress for older pupils. Test results in recent years have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics and the current Year 6 are also working at the level expected for their age. Newcomers with gaps in their learning make good progress, although for some there is insufficient time to close all of their gaps, especially in their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills which were low last year. More attention has been given to these skills and pupils are on track to get closer to average in the national assessment this year.
- Daily sessions practising mental mathematics have been effective in raising pupils' confidence in applying their skills to solve problems. Current data show a rise in attainment over last year, with more pupils with the ability to reach the above-average Level 5 and some with the potential to gain the high Level 6.
- Reading has improved and, in Year 1 in 2014, the results of the national screening check were broadly in line with national levels. The continued focus on phonics is improving attainment for the current Year 1 pupils. Many in Year 2 use their phonics skills to tackle new words but not all are yet reading fluently and with understanding. This improves in Key Stage 2 and pupils enjoy the daily guided reading sessions. These include opportunities to read with an adult, in a group or work on a research activity. Pupils who read to the inspector had favourite authors, enjoyed reading and could answer questions about the text with obvious understanding.
- Pupils often struggle with their writing because they do not always have the vocabulary to express their

ideas. Older pupils reap the benefits of their experiences over time in the school and often include a variety of imaginative words and ideas to make their work more interesting for the reader. In Key Stage 1, pupils do not write with enough imagination and accuracy in spelling to reach above-average levels.

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are identified promptly and support is put in place to meet them fully. These pupils benefit from the whole school following the same topic, and the flexibility of movement between years because they can work with pupils from other classes on the same topic, but at their level. Pupils with very specific needs, socially as well as academically, often receive support in one-to-one sessions with trained staff showing patience and perseverance to ensure good progress and full inclusion.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well because of effective use of the pupil premium funding. They make good progress and gaps between their achievement and that of others are closing. In 2014, on average, eligible pupils were three terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in school and four terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics. In writing, these pupils were two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in school and three terms behind others nationally. The gap was closer in reading, being just over one term behind non-disadvantaged pupils in school and just over one and a half terms behind when compared to other pupils nationally.
- The progress of the most able pupils is good overall and stronger in Key Stage 2, with a rise in the number of pupils reaching above-average levels. This is less evident in the proportion of pupils reaching above-average levels in Key Stage 1. The level of challenge for these pupils is not yet consistent in all classes and at times their progress is not fast enough.
- It is clear from walking around the school and talking to pupils and parents that pupils excel in other subjects. Their topic on the Commonwealth Games included high levels of skills in design and technology and information and communication technology. Dance and drama are used effectively to promote self-confidence and communication skills.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Nursery with levels that are generally lower than is typical for their age. Social skills and management of personal needs are not always secure. Some have limited communication or experiences beyond the home. From these individual starting points children make good progress, although they are not fully ready for Key Stage 1 by the time they leave Reception.
- Teaching is good because staff are experienced at meeting children's needs. Children learn their numbers well through a range of practical activities. These flow over into the outdoors as children learn to count and share using plastic bricks and hoops. Role play is imaginative and used well to promote language and relationships. The cinema is very popular in Reception and children enjoy buying tickets, selling ice cream and going under the dark curtain to find a seat and enjoy the story.
- Assessment is used effectively to identify those needing extra support as soon as possible so that help is available to help them catch up with others. The choice of activities allows the most able children to apply their skills, for example in writing shopping lists in the home corner.
- Leaders ensure the environment is as safe as possible; children feel safe and behaviour is good.
- Leadership and management are effective in identifying aspects to improve. Days are organised well and staff deployed efficiently. Visits are regular features to extend children's horizons. During the inspection, the Nursery children enjoyed a visit to the local library. A positive offshoot of this visit was that parents met children at the library and this has encouraged some to join the library themselves. Staff are aware that some of the resources, especially outdoors, are beginning to be shabby and not as exciting as indoors. Links with parents are managed especially well with care given to ensure a smooth start and transition to Key Stage 1.

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

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| Unique reference number | 104856 |
| Local authority | Sefton |
| Inspection number | 448279 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 168 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Hilary Lyall |
| Headteacher | Fiona Wood |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 December 2009 |
| Telephone number | 0151 5255026 |
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