

Norwood Primary School

Norwood Crescent, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 7DU

Inspection dates 16–17 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The school's performance has declined since the previous inspection. Pupils, especially the most able and disadvantaged, do not make good progress.
- Some weaknesses in teaching have not been tackled effectively enough by leaders and governors. Significant staff absence over time has hampered leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching.
- New systems to track pupils' progress and improve the quality of marking are not consistently applied by staff. As a result, pupils' progress slows.
- Provision in the early years requires improvement. Some activities are not challenging enough to enable children to reach their potential, particularly in outdoor activities.
- Teachers' sometimes weak subject knowledge and some frequent turnover of staff contribute to pupils reaching broadly average standards and not making good enough progress over time.
- Work in lessons and in pupils' books shows that it is not challenging enough because it is not closely matched to individual pupils' abilities.
- The quality of marking is variable. Typically, pupils do not receive effective guidance on how to improve their work. This hampers pupils' opportunities to make their work better. It also results in lessons that are not planned carefully enough to clear up any misunderstandings or challenge pupils further.
- The pupil premium funding is not used effectively enough to enable all disadvantaged pupils to achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Leaders and governors are aware of weaknesses in the school's performance. They have successfully tackled some weaknesses in teaching to hasten pupils' progress and make up for some previous underachievement.
- Standards are rising in all subjects, particularly at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are delightful. They are extremely polite and welcoming. They are well behaved in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils feel safe and secure and their parents agree.
- Senior and middle leaders as well as governors share a passion to improve the school.
- Parents have positive opinions about the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes. They looked at pupils’ books with subject leaders to evaluate their learning over time.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and listened to pupils reading from Key Stages 1 and 2. They observed pupils coming to school, at lunch and at break times.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and three members of the governing body. Meetings were held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the 64 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and collected views in conversations with parents.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils’ work and documents. These included the school’s view of its effectiveness, plans for improvement, records of pupils’ progress, behaviour, attendance and systems for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Else

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Norwood is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Reception classes attend school full-time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There has been a significant turnover in staff in the last two years and some staffing absence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, including the early years, so that it is at least consistently good, in order to raise standards and improve progress by:
 - planning work that is closely matched to the individual abilities of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - checking what pupils are capable of through using information about their starting points and closely reviewing their progress to their challenging targets
 - applying the school's assessment and marking policy consistently to guide pupils' improvement, take account of any misunderstandings and provide work for pupils who require further challenge
 - lifting expectations of what pupils are capable of, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who are most able
 - increasing teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in English (including punctuation, spelling and grammar) and mathematics
 - providing more challenging activities for children in the early years, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who are most able, to enable them to reach their potential.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - providing further training and support to extend teachers' subject knowledge and refresh their understanding and knowledge of school systems to mark pupils' work and review pupils' progress
 - increasing the knowledge of the governing body, especially in the use of the pupil premium and external information about pupils' performance, to help governors to challenge and support school leadership more effectively
 - providing detailed plans of work to be covered and progress goals to better inform and guide temporary teaching staff
 - providing support to develop the range of activities for children in the early years to enable them to reach the higher-level skills and understanding of which they are capable.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be conducted in order to assess how this area of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the effectiveness of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this area of the leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders and governors know what is needed to improve the school's performance although their evaluations are generally too optimistic. The headteacher is ambitious for pupils and staff share the same aspirations. They work together to improve pupils' outcomes and this is beginning to raise standards, particularly for pupils at the end of Year 6. The well-below-average standards at the end of Year 2 over the last few years have risen.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. They are effective in keeping pupils safe.
- Some previous underachievement of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, has been identified and acted upon. The school has used systems to support and challenge teachers' performance to eradicate some inadequate teaching. Leaders and managers know that this legacy must be addressed by urgently improving teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is to make up for some gaps in pupils' learning and to then accelerate pupils' progress to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable. Slow progress in Key Stage 1 was identified by leaders and governors as a cause for concern. Standards are beginning to pick up because of actions to improve teaching. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accelerate progress by their own teaching of some subjects in Key Stage 1.
- The new curriculum has been planned to increase pupils' knowledge and skills in a rich range of subjects. However, it is not effective in providing work for pupils that matches their individual abilities and interests.
- Teachers are held to account for the performance of pupils in their classes. Professional support and training are based squarely on raising pupils' outcomes through improving teaching. Subject knowledge is variable and this slows pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills that would move them further forward.
- Middle leadership is characterised by verve and an enthusiasm to make a difference to pupils' performance. It is too early to see the effects of many of middle leaders' actions but there is certainly a contagious atmosphere of change in driving forward improvements.
- The pupil premium funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils is used to appoint additional support staff and to provide activities to raise aspirations, such as university visits. The rates of progress of eligible pupils vary depending on how well they are taught, as is the case with other pupils. Governors do not sufficiently evaluate the impact of the pupil premium on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and, therefore, they do not know what difference the funding makes to pupils' outcomes. As a result, the school's promotion of equality of opportunity requires improvement.
- Part of the purpose behind the new curriculum is to place further emphasis on raising standards in English and mathematics, with a particular focus on improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is helping to raise standards. The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in fostering good relations. The school is very welcoming, with high-quality displays of work by artists and pupils. The environment is well cared for and a pleasant place to learn. Pupils are well behaved and very polite. They are conscious of being part of a community and of being British.
- The curriculum makes pupils aware about different forms of bullying and how to keep safe while using the internet. Good relations are fostered and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils are taught to respect people from different backgrounds than their own. This helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively to improve pupils' physical education skills and to increase their awareness and understanding of living life healthily. A large number of activities after school are focused on sport, from judo to hockey, for instance. These are well attended by pupils.
- The local authority identified weaknesses in the school's performance and is providing additional support and training for staff to improve teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Although governors challenge the performance of the school, they do not have a detailed enough knowledge of data to hold leaders to account effectively. They have taken part in much training to improve their effectiveness and more is planned. This includes training on analysing school data.
 - Governors know what the school does well and what it needs to do in order to improve. They have been instrumental in working with the headteacher to limit the impact of staff absence on the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Governors' knowledge of pay and progression linked to staff performance is detailed; it has helped in the school's actions to eradicate inadequate teaching and support improvements in teaching.

Nevertheless, this has not led to teaching or pupils' progress being good.

- Governors make a positive contribution to pupils' effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a curriculum that promotes respect and tolerance for people from different backgrounds and faiths.
- Governors manage the school's finances appropriately despite the costs of temporary staffing. This has been carefully managed and staffing costs have been reduced significantly through deploying staff in school more usefully. Governors are knowledgeable about how the pupil premium is spent but they have not ensured that it is used effectively enough to result in disadvantaged pupils achieving well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Although they are less focused in lessons where work is not matched well enough to their individual abilities, they remain well behaved. This does, however, reduce their productivity; this is in stark contrast to their good learning in lessons where work is clearly matched to their different needs and abilities.
- High expectations of pupils' work lead to careful, tidy presentation. When marking is not helpful or regular enough, pupils' presentation or interest in their work declines.
- Pupils behave very well around the school. From the Reception classes upwards, pupils open doors for each other and adults. They cheerfully and engagingly begin conversations with adults. They consider others and have a keen sense of fairness and justice.
- Pupils are encouraged to take pride in themselves and their community. This extends to their country and, consequently, pupils are very knowledgeable about British values and the rule of law. As a result, they are keen debaters and take their many responsibilities seriously and effectively. From being 'teaching assistants' to 'register monitors' and 'captains', they reliably and enthusiastically complete their tasks.
- Serious and philosophical questions are posted regularly by pupils in the 'Wonder Box'. Pupils reflect on how the universe began or why there are rainbows, for instance. The 'Smile Project' raises their awareness of people, especially children more unfortunate than themselves, and they raise much funding for charities, for example for a school in Nepal.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, wear their uniforms with pride and appreciate the very many additional school clubs provided for them in sport, music, drama and art to name just a few. Parents help their children and the school to ensure above-average attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils. Governors and the site supervisor are vigilant in checking the safety of school premises.
- Parents' responses to the online questionnaire and in conversations with inspectors demonstrate that they believe their children are kept safe.
- Effective systems and the curriculum make pupils aware of different types of bullying. Pupils spoken to believe that bullying is not a problem at their school. They say that they know whom to turn to if they have any concerns. School records about behaviour support their views. Pupils are taught about how to keep safe while using the internet.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Some weaknesses in teaching over time mean that pupils have not achieved as well as they should, particularly in Key Stage 1. Senior leaders and governors clearly identified these weaknesses and acted to deal with them. Staff absence has been managed appropriately by employing knowledgeable temporary staff. Their impact is sometimes limited when they are not given precise information about pupils' targets or exactly what needs to be taught to improve pupils' knowledge and skills. Teaching is, however, improving so that pupils now make at least the progress expected of them.
- The school's actions to improve teaching and raise achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics are resulting in higher standards but this is not a consistent picture across the school.
- Successful teaching in some classes, particularly in Key Stage 2, leads to higher standards and faster rates of progress. Work is planned to maximise each individual's learning. Much is expected from pupils in these classes and they respond to this by working with great energy and success.

- This effective teaching is not typical across the school and teaching quality is variable. In some Year 1 and Year 2 classes, pupils work without a sense of urgency because it is not clear exactly what is required from them or the work is too easy. Consequently, the most able pupils overall do not always reach higher levels in their work.
- The quality of support for learning is variable. It works well when it is based on thorough knowledge of what the lesson intentions are and of the precise levels of support and challenge individual pupils require. Sometimes support is either too general to be productive or it misses the opportunity to allow pupils to think things out for themselves. Some support skilfully guides pupils about what is required from them and sensitively challenges them to achieve their best work. The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement in line with that of other pupils and for the same reasons.
- Pupils' work is not always marked in enough detail to help them to improve it. When this happens, some misunderstandings are not cleared up and progress slows. High expectations and thorough marking eradicate gaps in learning and challenge pupils to achieve work at higher levels.
- The teaching of literacy, especially spelling, punctuation and grammar, is a school focus. It is expected to form part of most lessons. On the whole, this has led to rising standards in pupils' literacy and pupils make the progress expected of them. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not always reinforced and improved in other subjects and so pupils' progress falters.
- Some gaps in basic skills in the Key Stage 1 curriculum for mathematics affect older pupils when tackling more challenging mathematical problems in lessons. Most of these gaps are made up in Key Stage 2; as a result, standards have improved for Year 6.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics fell in 2014 and were below average overall. This was mainly because of below-average standards in writing and mathematics rather than in reading. Some groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, the most able and boys, did not make the progress expected from their broadly average starting points in writing. Currently standards are higher than this and much improved in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 have been well below average for a number of years. They have risen this year, especially in reading and mathematics. The most able pupils are now making better progress, especially in Year 6, where many more pupils are working at the higher levels.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils have been too broad and are now beginning to narrow. The impact of the pupil premium funding is not analysed precisely enough to assess how it makes a difference to pupils' achievement. In Year 6, in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with that of other pupils in the school was a year behind in reading, writing and mathematics; in spelling, punctuation and grammar it was more than a year behind. The attainment gap of disadvantaged pupils was not as broad when compared with national averages but still below average. Currently, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils has narrowed considerably, in Year 6 particularly. Gaps have narrowed overall across the school but this is still variable depending on the effectiveness of teaching in individual classes.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement. This is linked to the quality of teaching and support, which is variable. Clear guidance to explain tasks helps pupils to be productive. However, at times pupils do not move forward quickly because they are not always encouraged to persevere and think for themselves.
- Pupils are keen readers. Their skills in reading are generally better than those in writing and in mathematics although their achievement still requires improvement. Their comprehension skills are not developed well enough overall to raise standards in reading or help improve their writing skills. Although they are now getting better, particularly in Key Stage 2, writing skills require improvement, especially in spelling, punctuation and grammar and for boys. Achievement in mathematics requires further improvement. It has improved quickly in the last year and standards have risen, especially at the end of Year 6. Basic skills in mathematics are more assured in Key Stage 1 and gaps are made up more quickly as pupils progress through the school. Nevertheless, there are still some gaps in the knowledge of basic skills which hamper pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems at the higher levels.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start school in Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age.

In 2014, the number of children who reached the expected standard at the end of Reception was in line with the national average. Overall, children make the progress expected of them and are ready for learning in Year 1.

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Children learn appropriately about phonics (the sounds that letters make) by listening to their teacher sound out letters and by then participating in sounding them out themselves. Occasionally, children's concentration wanes, for example when they are kept sitting on the carpet for a long time doing work that does not interest them. Most children's early writing skills are reinforced by practising them in many outdoor and indoor activities. Opportunities are limited, however, for the most able children, particularly disadvantaged children, to experience more challenging activities.
- The expansive and extremely attractive garden landscape outdoors provides a very pleasant area in which children can learn. However, the richness of this outdoor area is not exploited to its full potential. Outdoor activities do not challenge or guide children consistently to tackle more advanced writing and number work, for instance. Indoor activities are many and help children to discover and learn well.
- Records of progress known as 'learning journals', supplemented with photographs, are helpful for parents to see what activities their children do. Nevertheless, the content of these records in terms of what each child has actually learnt is quite sparse. Some journals are remarkable for the amount of writing done by staff rather than what children have done.
- Children are well prepared for school life through opportunities to experience the setting before they start. Clear respect for each child is the cornerstone for their good behaviour. Children follow Reception routines quickly and enthusiastically. For instance, they tidy up after themselves and put their aprons on for sand and water activities. Children learn to share and take turns. They think about other people as well as themselves and often help each other and the staff. They grow in confidence and are very keen and articulate conversationalists.
- Staff form positive relationships with children and their parents. Children are looked after well.
- Leadership of the early years requires improvement because teaching and children's achievement are not good. Evaluations of the provision are too generous and insufficiently grounded in the achievement and development of children, especially for the most able children, including the most able disadvantaged children. Leadership is effective in ensuring children's safety and promoting their good behaviour.

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

Unique reference number	104865
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	461904

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Felicity Knight
Headteacher	Lee Dumbell
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2011
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