

Wolverham Primary and Nursery School

Milton Road, Wolverham, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 5AT

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Senior leaders relentlessly focus on raising pupils' aspirations and achievement. Their expectations are high. Leaders do everything they can to improve pupils' life chances and break down any barriers to learning. They do so while providing a high level of care and nurture.
- There was a dip in standards in 2015, which leaders have addressed thoroughly. Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching, particularly in the early years and in Year 1; consequently, standards are rising quickly.
- Pupils make sustained, excellent progress from their low starting points. They attain at least average standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 and above-average standards in mathematics.
- Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants use their excellent subject knowledge to include every piece of learning they can in very carefully planned lessons. They identify pupils' errors and skills very well and use this to construct activities that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching is particularly effective in Years 4 and 5 and in mathematics, computing and reading.
- In Years 1 and 2, the most able pupils' writing skills are not always extended or consolidated in subjects such as history, geography and science.
- There is outstanding provision in the early years. Children's outcomes have risen and an average proportion attain a good level of development. Children are ready for Year 1. Given their starting points, this is excellent progress.
- A major contributory factor to pupils' progress is their attitudes to learning. They are very keen and eager. They persevere and concentrate well and their behaviour is excellent.
- The school does an excellent job in promoting pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe, for example when online.
- There is not enough coverage in the different subjects of people from a wide range of diverse backgrounds.
- The governing body is shaping the school's development and future. Governors have a good oversight of what leaders have done to improve teaching and standards, mainly in English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2 with good opportunities to extend their writing skills in history, geography and science.
- Extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of diversity by:
 - including teaching pupils about people from a wider range of backgrounds in the different curriculum subjects to reflect the groups identified in the 2010 Equality Act
 - making sure that teachers challenge stereotypes in their teaching and choice of activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Senior leaders are highly effective. They react quickly to identify and rectify any weakness. They make no excuses for low standards or slow progress and use assessment information incisively to take quick action to readjust staff deployment, training or provision. Leaders are well trained, experienced and knowledgeable. They keep abreast of local and national changes. They are highly reflective and responsive to other agencies' evaluations, advice and guidance. The culture of Wolverham is outward-looking and reflective. Leaders constantly work to refine and improve the school.
- Senior leaders frequently check on the quality of teaching and on the progress of different groups of pupils. They are able, using an online recording system, to quickly analyse and compare the impact of teaching in different subjects or key stages. This is then used to identify staff training needs. Teaching in Year 1 has improved, as have outcomes for children in the early years.
- Middle leaders provide very good leadership of their subjects. This is because they have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in the subjects they lead. The leader for design and technology, for example, provided effective training for staff as a result of a relative weakness she had identified from her monitoring. The leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is proactive in seeking new and innovative ways to tackle pupils' barriers to learning. She has a very good overview of how well individual pupils are progressing towards achieving their targets and of the quality and impact of any additional specialised teaching.
- In the past, the pupil premium grant has been used well, but there has been an over-focus on the lower-ability pupils instead of challenging those of middle ability to become higher attainers. There has also been less of a focus on developing pupils' academic skills. Senior leaders and governors recognised this and have now better focused spending on improving academic subjects.
- The pupil premium grant has been successful in reducing pupils' barriers to learning, such as an inability to afford to go on school visits. Leaders' sharp analysis of pupils' barriers to learning is a key reason why this group of pupils makes good, sustained progress. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities to children who are looked after very well. They make sure they are safe, protected and make good progress. Leaders report annually to governors about their outcomes.
- The curriculum has a very good impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding across the full range of subjects, but it is particularly effective in mathematics and computing. One of the reasons why pupils make so much progress is because they enjoy what they learn about and are very eager for more. There is an excellent focus on British values in the curriculum, which means that pupils are constantly thinking about democracy, the rule of law and moral issues.
- Pupils make good progress in their spiritual development and their understanding about different religions, societies and countries through their work in geography,

history and religious education. They also have some very good opportunities, through working with visiting artists and trips out, to extend their cultural development and understanding. They do not have a sophisticated understanding of diversity because the curriculum has been overly focused on men, including through the study of significant male artists and musicians. Pupils study classic poetry such as Noyes' 'The Highwayman', but do not think about the stereotypical image of a subservient woman that it presents. Leaders have changed the school's curriculum so that the schemes of work better reflect the diversity found in modern Britain.

- Leaders make very good use of the external government funding to develop sport and physical education. As a result of the spending, staff have been trained by specialist coaches in how to improve the teaching of gymnastics. Olympic medallist Beth Tweddle has visited the school and provided high-quality gymnastic input. Pupils are more involved in competitive sport and competitions than previously and their sporting skills have improved. However, the website did not accurately show how well the sport premium was being spent and its positive impact.
- The local authority has used expertise from within the school to support and guide leaders and teachers in other schools locally. The headteacher is a national leader of education and it is clear why. Her expertise, experience and knowledge are invaluable. The local authority and external consultants have provided effective support and guidance to the early years, particularly to help set up the two-year-old provision, which is relatively new. It has also provided some useful guidance with the new assessment arrangements to help make sure the teachers' judgements at the end of Year 2 are accurate, which they were.

Governance of the school

- The governing body sets and shapes the strategic direction for the school, including making sure that its work improves pupils' life chances. Governors have an appropriate oversight over the quality of teaching and the impact leaders' actions have on improving pupils' outcomes. They make no excuses for any sign of underachievement in the different groups of pupils and are not afraid to hold teachers to account if they are not performing at the required standard. They have an in-depth knowledge of how well pupils are achieving in English and mathematics, but less so in other subjects.
- The governors are knowledgeable. They regularly check that the governing body has the necessary skills within its membership to be able to provide effective leadership. New recruits are checked to make sure they have the necessary knowledge to be effective governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils' safety is given high priority and staff are vigilant. Staff are well-trained to identify any symptoms of possible danger or potential abuse, including from more extreme behaviour such as radicalisation. The headteacher has made sure that new and recently qualified teachers have a full induction regarding safeguarding.

- The policies and procedures for reporting or referring incidents are very clear and applied effectively. This means that teachers and learning mentors have been able to intervene, for example, to provide families with support when pupils are at risk from losing out on their education by being frequently absent.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and other adults provide relentlessly effective teaching across the school. There are particular strengths in Years 4 and 5 where teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to ask very well-crafted questions to develop pupils' thinking. In a computing lesson, for example, the teacher successfully challenged the most able pupils. They could already write a program for the crane to stack boxes in order, but following the teacher's questions they were able to write a program using as few steps as possible. His skilful support and questioning enabled all pupils to gain in knowledge and understanding.
- Incisive questioning is a feature of high-quality teaching. Almost all teachers and teaching assistants have excellent subject knowledge, which they use successfully to pose open questions to make pupils think more deeply. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were challenged to think about and explain where and why a decimal would fit in a sequence of other decimals. Most-able pupils had to think hard to find missing numbers to three decimal places. On a few occasions, teaching assistants use incorrect grammar when teaching their groups. The headteacher has already recognised this and has started to put in extra training and support for individuals.
- The teaching of reading has been reorganised and is highly effective. As you walk around the school in the morning, there is a myriad of different teaching groups spread across classrooms and corridors, using every space adults can find. It is a hive of activity with pupils completely focused on their phonics sounds or blends. Pupils successfully recount previous sounds they have learned and then learn effectively how to read, pronounce and write the new sounds. Walking around the different groups, inspectors heard a chorus of accurate and well-pronounced phonics sounds emanating from pupils in many different nooks and crannies in the school.
- Adults ask open questions to make pupils think more deeply about characters in their books. The most able readers are asked to think about characters' motives and feelings and are asked to consider the author's use of certain vocabulary. As a result, they are challenged very well to comprehend what they have read. The most able readers read with fluency and increasing speed and intonation. Less-able readers make good use of their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words.
- Teachers and other adults assess pupils' learning frequently throughout the day, through observations, questioning and looking at pupils' work. Crucially, the next day's and week's lessons are shaped as a result of the gathered assessment information. Teachers use the more formal half-termly assessment in a similar way to target groups of pupils who may be in danger of losing ground or not attaining a high enough standard.
- Most pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoyed lessons, particularly in art, physical education and mathematics. They were less enthusiastic about science and religious education. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their

knowledge in history, geography, science and design and technology, particularly in key stage 2 where teaching is most effective. Pupils' science work showed very good progress in the skills of experimentation from rudimentary observations in Year 1 to shrewd observations of variables by the end of Year 6. However, the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have enough good opportunities to extend and apply their writing skills in geography, history and science. This is, in part, because the worksheets they complete only require an odd word, sign or caption rather than extended sentences.

- Teachers sometimes miss chances to teach about the full range of equality that is described in the 2010 Equality Act. In a topic on Romans, for example, the teachers missed a chance to dispel any myths that all Romans were white men and dressed as soldiers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. All adults work hard to make sure pupils have the skills they need to stay safe. The pupils have, for example, a very good understanding of security when using gaming platforms and chat rooms in order to stay safe online. Staff organise a very good range of visits and visitors to enforce their message around safety. A local police community support officer, for example, came into school to discuss safety around bonfires and fireworks as well as about safe practices during the Halloween festivities.
- Parents who completed Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive about the school's work to keep their children safe. The pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that everyone accepts, respects and gets on with everyone else, particularly new pupils or those from different countries. They said that there is some occasional name-calling and bad language. As one pupil commented to an inspector, 'No school is rid of it but we keep it at a minimum.' The staff are vigilant and are managing the behaviour of a very small group of pupils, and incidents have reduced. Pupils said they feel safe and there is rarely any bullying.
- Leaders have introduced training for staff in how to deal with any pupils' mental health issues and how to de-escalate any serious incidents that may occur. There is a genuine warmth between staff and pupils and relationships are strong. Staff take the time to get to know pupils well and identify any personal development needs that they may have. Leaders have a strong focus on developing pupils' language and communication skills. This is key to enabling pupils to express how they are thinking and feeling and whether they have any anxieties, worries or concerns.
- Pupils readily and enthusiastically take on responsibilities in school such as leading play with younger pupils, school and eco council representatives. They also carry out fundraising activities for charities and good causes.
- Pupils are taught how to access and use a wide range of resources independently and safely. They show very good levels of concentration and perseverance in activities and tasks and resilience if things are not correct or do not work.

- In the breakfast club, there is a good range of activities and games to interest and engage pupils of all ages.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very polite, friendly and respectful to each other and to adults that work in the school. They are very keen and eager to learn and highly attentive to the teacher and other adults through the lessons. This excellent behaviour is one of the pivotal reasons why pupils make rapid progress, they are ready to learn and teachers lose no time out of their lessons having to manage behaviour.
- In lessons, pupils are rarely disrupted by others and are allowed to concentrate on their work. They respond quickly to adults' requests and questions. They have a very good understanding and respect for the school's behaviour systems. They are convinced that these systems would work if a pupil's behaviour needed to improve.
- The playground is an exciting, very attractive, extensive space with a designated cycle track and sports area. Each zone has age and size appropriate equipment and resources. Pupils play together peacefully and have lots of things to do at play and lunchtime. In one play time, for example, pupils built assault courses using boxes, ropes, markers and balls, and confirmed that resources are always available to use and to develop their imagination and creativity.
- There has been a reduction in the number of days lost to exclusions and the staff manage individual pupils who have behaviour needs very well. Attendance overall is in line with similar schools nationally. The attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils has affected the published data. However, there are some valid and significant medical reasons why these absences have occurred. The staff do all they can to reduce absences, including rewarding pupils for good attendance and providing transport for pupils from home. The extra support from staff has increased some pupils' attendance by over 30%.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The published attainment information does not paint a full or accurate picture of pupils' progress because a significant proportion of pupils come to the school part way through their education or not speaking English. From the full range of starting points pupils make excellent and sustained progress.
- In Years 1 and 2 pupils are able to read familiar and unfamiliar words by breaking the words down into different phonic sounds and blends. In one class, for example, pupils confidently and competently read and spelt words such as 'square', 'yawn' and 'dawn.' Most pupils in these year groups make very good progress from when they start at school. Lower-ability pupils in Year 2 can read individual words accurately but they lack fluency. The most able pupils in contrast read with expression and intonation, linking sentences together very well when they read aloud. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is ever-closer to the national average and the difference in progress between groups of pupils diminishes. Across the school, pupils read frequently and cover a wide range of different reading books. By the end of Year 6, pupils' reading is slightly higher than the national average. The disadvantaged pupils have caught up

with other pupils nationally and, because of targeted teaching, some higher-ability disadvantaged pupils attain high standards.

- Standards in writing are rising. Writing was an issue raised at the inspection in September 2015. From well-below-average starting points, struggling to form letters and words, pupils make rapid progress. In Year 4, for example, pupils recapped their knowledge and understanding of word groups such as noun, verb, preposition, adverb and adverbial phrases. They then thought deeply about how the meaning of a sentence could be affected by the positioning of subordinating conjunctions and clauses linked to their work studying the Vikings. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards slightly above the national average. In Reception and Year 1, there is a wide difference between the disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally but over the seven years in school the gap closes quickly. In pupils' work in Years 4, 5 and 6, the disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are using highly expressive language and vocabulary in their accurate writing.
- In mathematics, pupils make rapid progress. From struggling to identify simple numbers in the early years, pupils achieve average standards by the end of Year 2. This was shown in a lesson in which pupils in Year 2 thought deeply about division calculations and explained their thinking mathematically with confidence and fluency. By the end of Year 6, standards in 2016 were above the national average and pupils had made above-average progress across key stage 2.
- The most able pupils concentrate hard on their activities and develop perseverance. There are almost no pupils who are identified as most able before Year 2 because they have so much ground to catch up from their starting points to even match the national average. By the end of Year 6 the most able pupils are articulate and overwhelmingly positive about the school. In key stage 2, the tasks are challenging and pupils are asked to deepen their knowledge and apply their skills across subjects.
- Outcomes in science have been below average. Pupils' work, however, indicates that over the course of their time at school pupils develop a good range of scientific vocabulary which they use well to explain scientific principles and phenomena. In history, pupils develop a good knowledge about different historical eras, people and events.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress despite their learning difficulties. The school employs its own speech and language therapist and the benefits are showing across the school. Pupils make very good progress in their speech and ability to articulate and explain their views and ideas clearly.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children's outcomes have improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development has risen and in 2016 was close to the national average. Taking into account children's low starting points in reading, writing and number, this constitutes excellent progress. Leaders have reorganised the teaching to incorporate more adult-led groups. In one Nursery group, for example, a group of children quickly developed their scientific curiosity and understanding. They used pipettes to squeeze water onto a bath bomb and described the effect using words such

as 'dissolve'. As a result of the focused teaching, each group of pupils was challenged.

- Parents overwhelmingly praise staff for the way they settle children into the school and for very effective communication between parents and staff. The transition into school is well-thought-out and effective, meaning the stress of leaving a child at school for the first time is minimised. Through no fault of the school, however, not all information is shared with teachers from other partner agencies. The school does not receive, for example, the details of the two-year health checks and some early years providers do not pass on academic information about the child's development.
- The leadership of the early years is highly effective. The leader uses weekly meetings of all staff to disseminate assessments made on children's skills and development and the results of any monitoring activities such as lesson observations. This allows there to be consistency between all adults in making sure pupils are challenged. As a result of these meetings, adults' understanding of the national requirements of the early years has improved, as has the quality and precision in their observations.
- The adults in the two-year-olds' class are skilled. They successfully develop children's language development and listening skills. Through the routines and activities, they successfully encourage children to repeat simple rhymes, songs and phrases. No time is wasted. They sit with a key worker during snack time and develop their vocabulary and understanding.
- Teachers are highly effective in using children's interests and daily events to develop children's speaking, listening, vocabulary and knowledge. The inspection was on one of the coldest days of the year and adults used this opportunity to take children outside to see the frozen ice in the playground and to discuss properties of ice and to use key vocabulary, such as freeze, melt and temperature. On a very few occasions, children's activities away from adults were unchallenging for the most able.
- Children across the three year groups behave very well and are attentive and responsive to the teachers. They concentrate on activities and share resources very well. They are keen to learn. They choose and use resources safely and carefully. They follow hygiene rules and systems and other rules to keep them safe.

School details

Unique reference number	111089
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10012472

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Jenkins
Headteacher	Tracy Webb
Telephone number	0151 338 2242
Website	www.wolverham.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@wolverham.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2012

Information about this school

- By the end of the inspection, the school met the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Wolverham is an average-sized primary school and most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be disadvantaged is almost double the national average.
- A high proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The proportion of pupils supported because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average at 12%.
- The school has met the most recent floor standard (the minimum attainment and progress expected by the government).
- The school provides part-time education for two-year-olds and three-year-olds as well

as full time provision in Reception. It also manages a breakfast club each morning from 8am.

- The headteacher is a national leader of education and has, since the previous inspection, supported a range of schools in the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, art and history. They looked through pupils' work to gain an understanding about the impact teaching has on pupils' outcomes. They listened to pupils read.
- They spoke formally with three groups of pupils and spoke with pupils around the school.
- They took into account the views of the 31 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and also those of a number of parents dropping their children off at school in the morning.
- Inspectors held meetings with a number of staff including newly and recently qualified teachers and with those who lead provision in art, music, science, English and special educational needs.
- They met with a representative of the local authority and two members of the governing body.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Saeeda Ishaq	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Beard	Ofsted Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Ofsted Inspector

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