

Arnot St Mary CofE Primary School

Arnot Street, Walton-on-the-Hill, Liverpool, Merseyside L4 4ED

Inspection dates

31 January to 1 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has ensured that the school's vision for 'All children to love, learn and grow' has become a reality. Senior leaders and governors are resolute in successfully driving improvement.
- Middle leaders demonstrate an eagerness to support senior leaders in continuing to improve the school. They realise that they require greater development to fully deliver their responsibilities.
- Teaching is consistently good. Rigorous checking and support has made sure that it continues to improve. Classrooms are stimulating and exciting. Lessons are well structured. Occasionally, activities do not fully extend understanding and provide maximum challenge.
- Governors provide effective support to senior leaders. They know the school and monitor its work carefully.
- Pupils' work is checked frequently to help them learn. Pupils know how to make their work better.
- Currently, pupils make good progress and this is steadily improving. But they do not always gain greater understanding. Current attainment of pupils is good.
- Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Their learning needs are accurately assessed and appropriate support helps them to learn.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good. Strategies are well devised to support their learning and personal development.
- The school keeps pupils very safe and they appreciate its close and caring community. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. Behaviour is good and pupils are happy, friendly and welcoming.
- The provision for early years is well managed and children make good progress. Work is exciting and stimulating. However, boys make less progress than girls.
- Opportunities to support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the understanding of British values are extensive. The respect and tolerance displayed by pupils is a strength. They are well prepared for the diverse nature of modern Britain.
- Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils make maximum progress by always providing them with challenging work which allows them to extend their learning.
- Make sure that attendance continues to improve by maintaining and monitoring the school's robust improvement strategies.
- Enhance the skills of middle leaders so that they can:
 - check on progress and teaching in their areas of responsibility
 - ensure literacy and numeracy skills are consolidated across the curriculum.
- In early years, make sure that boys make as much progress as girls.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has created a caring school community. As part of their drive for continuous improvement, senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching. They have also refined and enhanced the content of the curriculum and the evaluation of staff performance. Progress is now good.
- Senior leaders and governors have identified the improvement of the quality of teaching as a major priority over the past two years. The monitoring of teaching is supported by focused targets defined by the evaluation of staff performance. A rigorous monitoring cycle is supplemented by targeted training, the sharing of effective practice and external moderation. Supportive feedback helps teachers to improve. The impact is that teaching is now consistently good and improving. However, work in lessons does not always provide enough challenge to make sure pupils gain greater understanding.
- The process for evaluating staff performance has been revised. The comprehensive system produces robust targets linked to school improvement priorities. It is rigorously evaluated by the headteacher and governors. Support for newly qualified teachers is of high quality and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Imaginative project work extends pupils' learning across subjects. For example, a project on Tudor England used history as a springboard for related work in art, design technology and writing. Spanish is a strength, and the school received the Liverpool quality mark for modern foreign languages.
- Pupils have opportunities to extend their experiences in music and drama by attending concerts, the theatre and participating in the school choir. A link with a local secondary school provides greater sporting opportunities and help with mathematics and writing. Those most skilled in mathematics had the opportunity to enter and win a local competition.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively. It is used to assist both the learning and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils face many barriers to their learning. The school is aware of these challenges and is employing effective strategies to address them. Current information on pupils' outcomes indicates that differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing.
- Primary physical education (PE) and sport funding augments successfully pupils' sporting opportunities and well-being. Opportunities for increased participation in swimming have been developed, especially for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have access to a range of sporting activities including new ones such as yoga and cricket. Specialist coaches have been employed to train and help school staff in delivering PE. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are extensive. Mutual respect and tolerance are at the heart of the school's work. All faiths, cultures and races are readily accepted and differences are celebrated. The morning worship session explores spiritual values including opportunities for reflection and discussion. The dangers of racism are explored through a link with a local football club, and a trip to Barcelona aids the understanding of different cultures. The international day of

languages involves parents in discussing their cultures and sampling each other's foods. Pupils are well prepared for the diverse a nature of modern Britain.

- British values and heritage are fostered both within and beyond the curriculum. A visitor from the British Legion described what life was like in the local community during the second world war, including how to wear a gas mask. The sacrifice of the first world war was brought home by discussing why poppies are worn. Pupil elections to the school council provide a direct experience of democracy and the responsibility it carries. The history of the monarchy is studied in a project about the Tudors. These experiences give pupils an understanding of British heritage.
- The local authority provides a purely monitoring role to a school it views as good.
- Middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities. They are starting to play a role in driving whole-school improvement priorities forward. However, they are still developing as leaders. They are being trained to assess pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching. They have made a start in integrating literacy and numeracy across subjects. This is especially true of the English coordinator, who has been longer in post. However, middle leaders are aware of the need to consolidate these initiatives further.
- Parents are warmly greeted by staff at the start of the school day. The school values parents' involvement, and they play an active role in school life. Parents are invited to attend whole-school worship and class assemblies. Workshops in e-safety and mathematics helps them to assist in their children's well-being and learning. Reports to parents clearly highlight learning across subjects and provide targets to improve. Consultation evenings are well attended.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders. They understand the school's strengths and the challenges it faces. Governors engage in focused visits to gain first-hand information on progress against school priorities. They are proud of the school's religious focus and its harmonious community.
- Governors understand how pupil outcomes are used to measure staff performance and help to moderate the process. They monitor the use of pupil premium and primary PE funding to ensure these funds are used effectively. They are aware of issues around attendance and monitor it closely.
- Governors take pupils' safety very seriously and make sure the school's provision meets requirements. The safeguarding governor has received relevant training and is an active member of the school's safeguarding team. He also scrutinises safeguarding documentation to make sure it meets requirements. Governors also thoroughly check risk assessments. They have undertaken training such as in finance, safer recruitment and pupil outcomes information to support them in their role.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors are resolute in providing a safe environment for all. The

school site is secure. The process for monitoring staff recruitment meets requirements. All relevant documentation is in place, and all staff have received the required training.

- Pupils receive information in lessons and other activities on how to keep safe. Lessons on the dangers of drug abuse, e-safety day and a visit from Childline advisors are some examples. The school works closely with parents to make sure that their children are safe. Workshops on how to stay safe on the internet is one example. Parents' views clearly indicate that the school looks after the safety of their children extremely well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improving teaching has been major school focus over time, and it is now consistently good. Classrooms are very attractive and engaging places. Well-structured lessons encourage learning.
- Questioning is used successfully to consolidate and expand learning. In Year 6, questions were progressively designed to define mathematical concepts and address misconceptions. This resulted in good progress.
- Teaching assistants maintain a sharp focus on supporting learning. They understand pupils' needs and plan work with teachers that is suitable. Their support is particularly effective when working with pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities. They use resources well to consolidate skills, for example showing how a number line can be used to better work out problems.
- Homework helps pupils to consolidate and expand their knowledge. It is effectively used to reinforce basic skills such as spelling or to extend work in mathematics. A strong feature is the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in homework.
- The school's assessment scheme is used effectively to match work to the needs of most pupils. However, sometimes, the need for increased challenge is not fully recognised.
- Reading is taught effectively. Teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to read. Texts are challenging and teachers ensure that pupils have the support needed to tackle them with vigour and confidence. The use of topic work also supports wider reading, but this is not fully integrated and monitored across all subjects. Teachers are successfully teaching phonics, and this has supported the development of both reading and writing. Activities are often fun, and the use of engaging resources reinforces learned sounds and introduces new ones. Staff encourage pupils to apply their skills to create words.
- Inspection evidence including an extensive look at pupils' work indicates that writing is taught successfully. Work in books demonstrates good progress across the school. In key stage 1, teachers provide appropriate resources and imaginative tasks to develop pupils' skills in writing sentences with the correct punctuation. In key stage 2, pupils are provided with clear opportunities to write imaginatively using a variety of styles.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective and this is reflected in current outcomes information and inspection evidence. Mathematical concepts and the use of calculations are carefully explained, and a variety of appropriate resources are used. Lessons are well planned and pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities receive

effective support. However, learning sometimes lacks challenge for all ability groups and does not enhance deeper understanding.

- Staff have high expectations. In Year 5, Spanish was used extensively by both the teacher and pupils to secure a high standard of fluency and confidence. However, occasionally, the level of challenge is not always high enough to support deeper learning for all abilities.
- Although the development of literacy and numeracy skills is a feature of topic work, they are not yet fully integrated and measured across all subjects. New initiatives such as staff training have begun the improvement process.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils believe they are well looked after as part of a close and caring community. One said, 'Teachers are always there to help and take care of you.' They appreciate the opportunities they receive to understand how to be safe including road safety, e-safety and the dangers of bonfire night. Parents fully endorse the school's efforts to make sure their children are safe.
- Healthy lifestyles are actively encouraged. 'Sport and health week' encourages both physical fitness and healthy living. Sports clubs are very well attended. The school is successful in external competitions, which enhances both fitness and self-esteem.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop responsibility and leadership. The elected school council's involvement with the Liverpool school's parliament helps the pupils acquire an understanding of leadership beyond the school. Pupils have also been actively involved in the school's building programme by electing class representatives to attend building committee meetings.
- Pupils embrace diversity. They are very tolerant and respectful of each other's backgrounds and cultures. One pupil said, 'We accept anyone, faith, culture and skin colour. Everyone gets treated the same.'
- Pupils know what bullying is. They also understand it can take many forms including cyber bullying. Pupils say there is no bullying at the school, but would know where to get help if it did occur. This is reflected in school documentation. Pupils are helped to understand bullying through 'forgiveness week' which explores how a person being bullied might feel. Younger pupils also explored this theme by the use of teddy bears to demonstrate love and feelings.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well during the school day including lunch and breaktimes. They understand the school's high expectations of behaviour and respond quickly to instructions. Pupils are very hospitable and keen to speak to visitors.
- Pupils come to lessons ready to learn and eager to do their work. They usually display

enthusiasm and sustain their interest. However, occasionally when work does not fully challenge them, they lose interest.

- Attendance is improving over time. The school has made attendance an ongoing high priority. Clear strategies and systems have been implemented with vigour and their impact is carefully monitored. The welcoming breakfast club also encourages good attendance. The work of the attendance officer is well supported by all staff to encourage regular attendance. Evidence including case studies show that these strategies are paying dividends. Attendance has improved for all groups including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. At the time of the inspection, attendance was in line with national average, but the school is aware that the monitoring of attendance requires constant vigilance and continues to work with parents to instil the importance of attendance.
- There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions since 2015.
- Behaviour is managed with sensitivity and clarity. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and its expectations are understood by all pupils. Rewards for good behaviour such as 'gold stars' are popular. Parents, staff and pupils all believe that behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Results of national assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2016 were above average in mathematics and were broadly average in English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Pupils' outcomes were below average for reading and writing. Well-focused strategies have successfully addressed these issues and standards have significantly improved. Current school information indicates that pupils' outcomes are on track to attain above the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. An in-depth scrutiny of pupils' work and progress in lessons confirms this view.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 are improving. Below average results in Year 2 in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics have been tackled, and attainment is currently more in line with what is expected for this age. The school has taken robust action to secure this improvement, including the more rigorous teaching of phonics and a strengthened teaching team. Examples of pupils' writing have been moderated by the local authority and within the local schools' network. Inspection evidence verifies this improvement.
- Progress of pupils in Year 6 in reading and mathematics was comparable to all schools nationally in 2016. Pupils' progress in writing was below all schools nationally. This has improved and inspection evidence suggests that progress in writing is now good. Progress in reading and mathematics is also good.
- The proportion of pupils who pass the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below average over time. Conversely, they were above average at the end of Year 2 for the same period. The school has taken dramatic action this year to rectify this. A new phonics scheme has been introduced and fully implemented. All staff have received training and teaching has been strengthened. Progress in lessons and current assessment information indicate that pupils' understanding of phonics are improving significantly. This is the case for all groups of pupils who are on track to achieve above average results this year.

- From their starting points, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their progress is better in key stage 2 where the extra interventions provided for these pupils have had greater impact over time. However, inspection evidence and current outcomes information, suggests that their progress is also improving in key stage 1. Their range of needs are well identified and support is well focused.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress. Progress in lessons, work in books and current outcomes indicate that the difference between these pupils and other pupils is diminishing across the school. This is especially true for key stage 1. Pupils have many barriers to improvement. These are recognised by the school and interventions are well focused to improve pupils' progress and support their personal development. Evidence indicates that pupil premium funding is used well and the difference between disadvantaged pupils and others is diminishing.
- More able pupils make good progress. Currently, more are making accelerated progress especially in key stage 2. However, a lack of challenge in some lessons has hindered more pupils acquiring greater understanding.
- The needs of lower-ability pupils are well identified and effective strategies are in place to support their learning.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in Spanish, where they confidently use a new language. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of early years are good. The new leader of early years has taken decisive action to improve the provision. By using accurate assessments when children enter the school and ongoing assessments, children's learning needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place. From starting points below what is typical in all areas of learning, there is clear improvement over time and children make good progress. Children who have special education needs and/or disabilities are well supported, and pupil premium funding is used well to improve the progress of disadvantaged children. However, while boys make good progress in some areas, they are not yet making the same good progress as girls overall. The school is aware of this, and strategies have been put in place to support boys' learning. Children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Teaching is good. The indoor and outdoor learning areas are attractive and well resourced. Individual learning tasks are carefully designed to secure interest and excitement. For example, in Reception, children enjoyed a stimulating activity using modelling clay which helped them develop early writing skills. However, sometimes activities lack sufficient challenge, which do not deepen children's learning.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Children understand rules and routines and respond quickly to direction. They support each other with sensitivity in a calm and purposeful environment. Children are encouraged to act independently, such as when buttering their own toast or selecting snacks.
- Assessment has improved under the new leadership. Leaders accurately identify underachievement and provide support to help children catch up. Parents contribute to

the initial assessment process. The early years leader checks all assessments to confirm their accuracy.

- The teaching of phonics is much improved and is now consistently good. Phonics is a feature of all lessons. For example, in the nursery, children have regular opportunities to practise and write their sounds and letters.
- Children are well looked after and are kept safe. Close supervision is applied in both learning areas, and safety requirements are made clear to children. Staff have been trained in safeguarding to ensure that all requirements are met.
- Parents are very welcome in early years and feature prominently. In the morning, they freely engage with staff and help prepare children for learning. Workshops on phonics and invitations to stay and play or listen to a story allow them to directly help their children learn. Parents are very complimentary about the work of early years and consider 'The nursery staff are great. They are very approachable about any concerns you may have.'

School details

Unique reference number	135267
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10003308

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Trevor Latham
Headteacher	Fiona Roper
Telephone number	0151 286 1400
Website	www.arnotstmary.co.uk
Email address	asm-ao@arnotstmary.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 February 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a larger than average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The Nursery provides separate morning and afternoon sessions for children of different ages.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a range of sporting clubs.
- The school currently meets the government's floor targets, which are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

- Having previously supplied extensive support to the school, the local authority now provides a purely monitoring role.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2014. The leader of early years has been in post since 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons. Some were carried out jointly with the headteacher. They also observed registration, collective act of worship time, start of school, breaktimes, lunchtimes and the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with school staff, two representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Meetings and informal discussions were held with pupils. Informal discussions took place with parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised work in pupil's books in lessons and work produced over time in a range of books. They also listened to pupils read from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6.
- Inspectors examined school documentation relating to self-evaluation, development planning and pupil outcomes. They also scrutinised minutes of the governing body, monitoring reports for the local authority and information concerning safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and 18 parent responses from its free text facility. Inspectors also considered 10 responses from the pupil questionnaire and 32 from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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