

Hollins Green St Helen's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Birch Road, Hollinfare, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 6JS

Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 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

- This school is well led and managed. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's performance and her expectations of staff and pupils are high.
- Staff work well as a team and have a clear understanding of the aims and ethos of the school.
- Consistently good teaching across the school ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress in their learning. Teachers strive to make lessons interactive and fun.
- Progress and outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 are strong. However, although pupils make good progress in reading and writing at key stage 1, outcomes in mathematics are not quite as good.
- The results of the phonics screening check in 2016 were disappointing. Swift action has been taken by the school. As a result, the teaching of phonics is showing signs of improvement.
- Standards of behaviour around the school are good. Pupils are proud of their school, feel safe and enjoy attending.
- Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are very closely monitored. However, the feedback given to teachers after lesson observations is not as detailed as it could be to help them develop their practice further. Furthermore, there are no opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from each other.
- Governors play their part in ensuring that the school is focused on improving outcomes and life chances for pupils who attend the school.
- Children in Reception soon settle quickly into school life and achieve well. However, teaching assistants in the early years are not always deployed effectively to support children in their learning.
- The majority of parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school has crafted a broad and balanced curriculum which ignites pupils' passion and enthusiasm for learning.
- The roles of some middle leaders, for example of geography and history, are not as well developed as those of English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a greater proportion of pupils meet the required standard in the phonics screening check this academic year.
- Ensure that all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, at key stage 1 are challenged to achieve their very best in mathematics and are provided with more opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - sharing best practice across the school
 - ensuring that feedback to teachers after lesson observations focuses succinctly on the progress that different groups of pupils are making
 - develop the roles of middle leaders in subjects such as history and geography to allow them to have a greater impact on teaching, learning and assessment.
- Strengthen practice in the early years by:
 - reviewing the deployment of teaching assistants to ensure they take a more active part in children’s learning when whole-class teaching is taking place.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher displays a quiet and steely determination to ensure that each pupil receives the best possible education. She is crystal clear about what the school does well and the further improvements that are needed to raise standards to an even higher level.
- Leadership roles are shared effectively among staff. All staff work well as a team. They typically commented that 'it's a lovely school'. The headteacher values her staff and gives them good levels of support, including those who are new to the profession.
- Any underperformance is tackled with vigour. For example, due to a significant number of staffing issues in 2016, results in mathematics and phonics dipped at key stage 1. Immediately the wheels were set in motion to address both of these issues, with extra training and support for staff from senior leaders, the local authority and external consultants. As a result, outcomes in mathematics and phonics are improving.
- The school's priorities are clearly set out in order of importance in the school development plan. Teacher's targets and training are securely linked to these priorities and performance management systems for both teachers and teaching assistants are effective.
- A close watch is kept on the quality of teaching. Teachers value senior leaders' feedback. However, feedback after formal lesson observations does not give a detailed overview of the progress that different groups of pupils in the class are making. Furthermore, there are no opportunities for teachers to share best practice within the school and to learn from each other.
- The school works well with a number of schools within the locality to support and challenge each other to further improve outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders of English and mathematics monitor their subjects effectively and are very knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. However, some other middle leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility or analyse the progress that different groups of pupils are making.
- Although disadvantaged pupils are few in number, the headteacher ensures that the pupil premium funding is used to good effect to give this group of pupils the best possible chance to succeed. She has a clear understanding of the barriers that these pupils face which affect their learning. Money is spent to provide pupils with targeted support academically, socially and emotionally.
- The additional government funding to promote sport and physical education is well spent. It is used well to provide professional development and training for staff and increase pupils' participation in sporting activities after school. Pupils also take part in a varied range of inter-school sporting competitions, for example rugby and football.
- Effective use is made of the special education needs funding to ensure that the diverse needs of pupils who have special educational needs and / or disabilities are met.

- The curriculum is rich and varied. Subjects are either taught discretely or through topics. A broad range of trips and visitors further broadens the curriculum and enriches pupils' experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils go on a residential visit where they take part in outdoor learning activities to develop skills such as resilience, problem solving and teamwork. Other pupils visit Chester, which helps them gain an insight into the life of ancient Romans. Artists regularly work with pupils to help them enhance their creativity. By taking part in events such as 'inter-faith' week, pupils learn about other religions and cultures. British values are strongly embedded within the curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- The school website provides a wide range of information about all aspects of school life. It is well set out and easy to navigate. It gives a clear insight of what the school strives to achieve and its values.
- The majority of parents are pleased with the progress that their children make and the support they receive. Inspectors spoke to several parents on the playground who had high praise for the school. They told inspectors that they believe the school is well led and managed and that their children are making good progress. A small number of parents, who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, did express concerns about bullying but inspection evidence does not support their view.

Governance of the school

- Governors hold the headteacher to account and ensure that her performance management targets are securely linked to school priorities.
- Governors come from a range of professional backgrounds, including education. They know the school well and are aware of its strengths, priorities for development and the progress that all groups of pupils make.
- The governing body has a good awareness of how the school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils who attend the school.
- Governors ensure that a tight rein is kept on the school budget to ensure that school priorities are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school works in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. They have all read part 1 of 'Keeping children safe in education 2016' and talk with some confidence about the indicators of radicalisation, sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.
- Those who have responsibility for safeguarding have completed training at the appropriate level. The headteacher is aware that there must be someone with responsibility for safeguarding on the school premises at all times to deal with any safeguarding concerns.

- A filtering system is in place to keep children safe when they are online.
- The school site is secure and the identity of visitors to the school is closely checked.
- The single central record is compliant. There are clear and structured procedures in place for the recruitment of new staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- From observing teaching and looking at work in pupils' books inspectors are in full agreement with the school's self-evaluation that the quality of teaching, over time, is good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and questioning is effective. Activities are generally well planned to support learning for differing abilities within the class. Pupils' progress during lessons is well monitored and relationships at all levels are respectful.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They ensure that lessons start straight away and move at a brisk pace so that no learning time is wasted.
- Pupils write at length and for a wide variety of purposes. For example, younger pupils write detailed factual information about countries such as Kenya, China and Australia. Through their writing older pupils express their opinions about the Anglo-Saxons. Pupils' writing is beautifully presented and there is a consistent approach to handwriting across the school.
- Pupils find reading enjoyable and challenging. Comprehension skills are good and younger pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils read regularly at home and at school. Older pupils show the same love of reading. They talked with confidence about the different authors and genres that they like. Pupils clearly understand the importance of being able to read with confidence and the impact that not being able to read would have on their learning.
- Pupils are keen mathematicians. This was very evident during a mathematics lesson relating to data handling at key stage 1, and in a key stage 2 lesson where pupils were calculating the area of irregular shapes. However, work in pupils' books at key stage 1 shows that at times pupils find the work too easy, particularly the most able pupils. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Pupils have many opportunities to carry out scientific investigations and write up their conclusions. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils were given the freedom to use their own ideas and test out their theories to design a boat that floats from a wide range of different materials such as cardboard, plastic, cling film, foil and wool.
- Teaching assistants at key stage 1 and 2 are well deployed. They take an active part in pupils' learning and work in close partnership with the class teacher.
- The marking policy has recently been revised and is now followed by most class teachers. As a result, pupils are clear about how to improve their work. This contributes to the good progress that they make.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe, are proud of their school and enjoy attending. Pupils typically commented that 'the school provides a friendly environment; it feels like a second family'.
- Pupils value the importance of education. Many talked to inspectors about their hopes and ambition to go on to further education and become marine biologists, doctors and teachers. Fire, police and prison officers come into school to talk to pupils about their roles in society and raise pupils' aspirations.
- As elected members of the school council, pupils contribute to decision-making within the school. They raise money for charitable purposes and take a leading part in organising events, such as 'anti-bullying' week.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying and the distress that it can cause. They told inspectors that on occasions bullying does occur but teachers soon sort it out.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They have a good awareness of online safety and recognise the importance of not disclosing their password to anyone and of reporting any concerns to an adult. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and other professionals come into school and talk to pupils about healthy relationships and of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. Pupils also learn about keeping themselves safe when near water and about riding bikes safely.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspectors felt that the school had a warm and friendly atmosphere. Standards of behaviour observed in the dining hall, in the playground and as pupils moved around the school were good.
- Overall, similarly good standards of behaviour were observed in lessons. However, on occasions, when learning does not engage pupils' interest they can become fidgety and distracted.
- Evidence gathered at inspection shows that the small number of pupils who have behavioural issues are well supported by staff and their peers.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Good attendance is celebrated and there are clear procedures in place to chase up any unexplained absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children come into the early years with skills and knowledge that vary year on year. For example, in 2015 children's skills and knowledge were below those typical for their age while for the current academic year they are broadly in line. From their different starting points children made strong gains in their learning and were well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- Published data for 2016 highlights that outcomes in writing are a real strength at both key stages 1 and 2. At key stage 2, progress and outcomes in mathematics were strong. The number of pupils reaching the expected and higher standard in reading was broadly in line with the national average.
- The picture at key stage 1 was not quite as rosy. While pupils did well in reading, the number of pupils reaching greater depth in mathematics was below the national average.
- To compound matters, the results of the phonics screening check dipped in 2016 to below the national average. However, as a result of the swift action taken by the school this trend is reversing. Inspectors observed effective learning in phonics and senior leaders are monitoring pupils' progress with rigour to ensure that any underachievement is very quickly identified. Consequently, the headteacher is confident that this good progress can be sustained and that results will significantly improve this year.
- The needs of the most able pupils in the school are generally well met. For example, pupils are now taught in ability groups for phonics which ensures that activities are pitched at the correct level to drive pupils' learning forward at a pace. Furthermore, booster classes are provided to accelerate pupils' progress in subjects such as English and mathematics. The positive impact of this additional support can be seen in the 2016 published results, most notably at key stage 2. However, work in pupils' books highlights that pupils at key stage 1, particularly the most able, are not being consistently challenged to reach the higher standards in mathematics. As a result, at times, learning for this group of pupils is not as rapid as it could be.
- As a result of timely interventions and good partnership working with outside agencies, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good gains in their learning and development.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is low, making a statistical comparison with others nationally unreliable. The school's own assessment information and case studies show that this group of pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- In 2016, the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in science was above the national average for most groups of pupils. This was most notable at key stage 1, where 95% of pupils met the expected standard.
- Work in pupils' books and on display shows that pupils achieve well in a range of subjects such as geography, history and art. Pupils' artistic talents shone through in a Year 6 lesson where pupils had produced their own interpretations of the sculptures of Antony Gormley.

Early years provision

Good

- Consistently strong teaching over time and strong leadership ensure that all children get a good start to their education. Senior leaders have an accurate overview of the strengths of the early years and the priorities for development.
- Children feel safe and standards of behaviour are good. Adults are calm, kind and caring. They take time to listen to the children as they learn and play.
- Children's progress is closely monitored to ensure that any underachievement is quickly identified and that full coverage is being given to all seven areas of learning.
- Children develop positive attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy school. They are happy, confident and busy. During the inspection they were keen to show their work to inspectors, obviously proud of what they had achieved.
- Teaching assistants provide good levels of support when working with children during group activities. However, this support is not always as effective during whole-class teaching.
- Children engage in wide range of fun activities to support their learning. As they play they count in sequence and order objects according to size. Outdoors, children work well together measuring different objects and working out which are the tallest and the smallest. Children develop their awareness of scientific concepts as they explore and make predictions about which objects they think will float or sink. Conversation flows freely in children's play, which strongly supports their acquisition of language.
- Transition arrangements are effective and good relationships have been established with the pre-school which operates in the school hall. Staff work well in partnership with each other, sharing their expertise and resources.
- Staff meet regularly with parents to ensure that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents are provided with written information on the early years curriculum and attend workshops which give them an understanding of how phonics is taught in school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. At the time of the inspection there were no breaches to the statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	111364
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10024408

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 aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Colette Fairfax
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Smith
Telephone number	0161 775 2935
Website	www.warrington.gov.uk
Email address	StHelens_Primary@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the last inspection and there have been a number staff changes across the school.
- There is a pre-school and an out-of-school club, which offer wrap-around care, on-site. These settings are not run by the governing body and are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all classes within the school. The headteacher carried out two joint observations with the lead inspector.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, members of staff, two representatives from the local authority, parents and pupils. Inspectors also met with two members of the governing body.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtime, breaktime and in the classroom.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's information on pupils' outcomes and reports on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at examples of their work in books and on display.
- Account was taken of the 29 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire completed by parents. Consideration was also given to the online questionnaires completed by pupils and staff. Responses to the school's most recent questionnaire to parents were also considered.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sheila O'Keefe

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
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