

Moorfield Primary School

School Way, Moorfield Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 3HJ

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across lower key stage 2 and key stage 1 are not improving progress and attainment at a fast enough rate.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils, but this is not swift enough to help these pupils meet year group expectations. However, there is some recent evidence of improvement.
- Leaders new to post have not had sufficient time and training to check accurately the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Their plans for improvement lack the detail and timescales necessary to check the effectiveness of their actions.
- Governors have not checked the effectiveness of pupil premium expenditure with sufficient vigour to ensure that provision for disadvantaged pupils is effective and provides value for money.
- Monitoring and assessment of additional provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not sufficiently well developed and embedded to have an impact on sustained progress.
- Mathematics books show that pupils' understanding of key number facts is insecure, leading to misconceptions in learning.
- The most able pupils in lower key stage 2 and key stage 1 are insufficiently challenged to meet the higher national standards expected of them.
- The wider curriculum is not taught in sufficient subject-specific depth to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding in history and geography.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has a strong and unrelenting ambition to improve the school.
- High-quality teaching and raised expectations in upper key stage 2 are improving attainment and progress of pupils in mathematics and English.
- Children make good progress in early years due to effective teaching. Phonics teaching in the early years is taught well and children apply their knowledge to their writing and reading well.
- Pupils behave responsibly in class and around school and respect others' points of view; they are polite and well-mannered.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, as a result, raise standards in Years 1 to 4 by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve
 - opportunities are taken to share the best teaching practice across the school
 - in mathematics, pupils are given greater opportunities to solve problems and explain their mathematical thinking
 - adults check on how well pupils are learning so that they can quickly help those who are struggling and offer greater challenge to pupils who are secure in their understanding.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - newly appointed leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas are more focused on the impact of their challenge and support
 - governors use information about pupils' progress more effectively to hold the school to account and offer sharper challenge to school leaders, including middle leaders, about the outcomes achieved by different groups
 - additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is well managed and spent wisely to improve outcomes for these pupils, including those who are most able.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching or pupils' outcomes over time are consistently good. As a result, leadership and management requires improvement.
- Recent instability in staffing has contributed to a decline in standards. However, the new headteacher and her leadership team have identified the important issues for the school and have begun to tackle these with determination.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment systems are sufficiently robust. Tracking of pupils is more focused on attainment rather than progress. As a result, leaders and teachers do not always have the necessary information to ensure that work is set for pupils at the correct level. In most classes, teachers' expectations are not high enough and inconsistencies in teaching remain. Progress and attainment are too variable, especially for the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Most middle leaders are new to their posts and it is too soon to demonstrate any long-term impact that their actions might have had on pupils' learning or outcomes. Current training and support for individual members of staff is improving the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the teaching of writing is more effective because leaders have introduced an agreed approach, which all staff are following. However, leaders have not as yet challenged and supported staff sufficiently to address the variability in practice and in pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders successfully enrich the curriculum and make meaningful links between subjects, through topics, themes and visits. These broaden pupils' experiences, making learning interesting, and are helping tackle underachievement in English and mathematics. However, in many cases the improvements in English and mathematics are at the expense of subject-specific skills, for example, the understanding of chronology in history.
- The use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not sufficiently focused on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Improvement plans are too general and do not explain how the impact of the funding will be evaluated. Results in pupils' progress show that the impact is uneven across the school and for pupils of different prior attainment.
- Managing the performance of teachers is more robust this year than in the past. Reviews are directly linked to the teachers' standards and the progress that pupils make. Recent training is improving teachers' subject knowledge and their understanding of the school's new tracking system. Staff talk confidently about their raised accountability for achievement of the pupils in their classes and the higher expectations of teaching.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' rights, respect and responsibilities is evident around school, particularly their promotion of democracy. Members of the school community are justifiably proud of their success in the UK Youth Parliament Competition in 2016. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other and of adults. The promotion of pupils' moral and social development is stronger than that of their cultural and spiritual development.

- Sports funding has been used effectively to provide specialist teaching. This is having a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of physical education and the quality of provision. More pupils are joining after-school sports clubs and participating in competitive sports.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well. As a result, these pupils are making rapid progress to meet the standards expected of their year groups.
- The newly appointed headteacher has rapidly established a purposeful ethos and a shared vision about how the school will improve. Her openness and honesty is reflected in the improving partnership between leaders and governors. She has prioritised the areas of school development which have made the most impact and is using the experience and knowledge of the best teachers to share these improvements across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not held leaders to account for ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes are consistently good, resulting in a decline in standards over the past few years.
- Governors have not monitored the use of the pupil premium grant well enough to check that it is effective in improving the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, governors do not know whether expenditure is providing value for money.
- Following analysis of the key stage 2 national assessments in 2016, the governing body has reflected on its performance and commissioned an external adviser to work with them to audit their skills and improve their effectiveness.
- The governing body has agreed the school's immediate priorities for improvement and is supporting leaders to address these as a matter of urgency.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, governors and staff have implemented safeguarding policies and procedures which meet statutory requirements. Staff are well informed and have received recent training on safeguarding which follows the most recent national guidance. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about the safety and care of pupils.
- The school works effectively with local agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are identified and well supported. Leaders successfully engage with parents to make sure that pupils are safe and supported in school.
- The school's procedures and policies for keeping children safe on the internet are understood well by pupils. Whole-school theme weeks and special assemblies ensure that the important message of keeping safe is revisited often.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are too variable across the school to be good. Inconsistent teaching has resulted in too many pupils underachieving. Despite some recent improvements, not all pupils are making the progress that should be expected of them. In particular, the most able and disadvantaged pupils are not sufficiently challenged or supported to improve rapidly from their starting points.
- Discussions with pupils and checks in their books show that they have an insecure understanding of number facts and mathematical processes. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 do not have sufficient opportunities with the appropriate challenge to reason and solve problems in mathematics. The most able pupils are insufficiently challenged to meet the greater depth requirements. However, pupils' understanding of mathematics is improving because of recent changes to the curriculum, higher expectations of pupils' work and the sharing of quality teaching by subject leaders.
- The quality of feedback in line with the school's policy is not consistently applied across all classes. Consequently, some misconceptions are not addressed and future learning is not matched to pupils' understanding.
- Leaders have recently introduced new assessment procedures to track the standards that pupils are achieving. However, these are focused too much on attainment at the expense of pupil progress. Systems are embryonic and have not had sufficient time to give leaders appropriate information to draw robust conclusions about the quality of teaching and learning.
- The quality of support offered by teaching assistants is varied. Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong and is enabling these pupils to make improved progress. However, pupils and their parents value the support offered.
- Pupils in upper key stage 2 are completing work which is sufficiently matched to their assessed learning needs, including challenge for the most able in English and mathematics. Their writing includes varied sentence structures and openings, adventurous vocabulary and the correct features of the type of writing to engage and interest the reader.
- Very effective teaching and assessment of work during upper key stage 2 lessons enables the teachers to give useful feedback to pupils to support their understanding and address their misconceptions or provide appropriate challenge to those pupils who need it.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Pupils say that they feel safe; staff and the vast majority of parents agree. Pupils have a good understanding of the leaders' actions to keep them safe, including on school visits. The curriculum promotes pupils' healthy lifestyles and their emotional and social development well.

- Pupils report that bullying is rare. They are confident that any poor behaviour will be dealt with firmly and fairly. They report that adults will listen to them carefully and resolve any conflicts that they may have.
- Participation in clubs has increased across the school following the appointment of a sports coach. Strong teaching and good relationships have encouraged pupils to actively participate in netball and football clubs. During the inspection, the local rugby league club worked with pupils from Years 3 and 4.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not as strong as the promotion of social and moral development, although leaders are aware of this and have plans to improve pupils' awareness of other cultures and religions. Theme weeks, annually, raise pupils' awareness of different faiths, diversity and important national events, such as Remembrance Day.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop responsibility. They can be elected to the school council or become play leaders or book buddies to support their younger peers. Pupils are very proud of their work with national and local charities. A letter displayed in the hall shows how much the charity volunteers value their contributions to the local foodbank.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. They are polite and well-mannered, frequently holding doors open for adults and other visitors. Pupils behave responsibly and respect others' points of view.
- Behaviour records show that pupil behaviour is well managed. Pupils understand the school's expectations, value the rewards available for good behaviour and recognise the consequences for poor behaviour.
- In a very small number of lessons, a few instances of low-level disruption were seen.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good. Leaders have effective systems to follow up instances of absence or lateness. These systems have resulted in attendance rates for all groups of pupils approaching or matching national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the national assessments in 2016, pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. Middle-ability pupils' attainment was below the national average at key stages 1 and 2. Pupils did not make enough progress from their starting points and too many underachieved, including the disadvantaged.
- Too few higher-attaining pupils achieved the higher standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2016. Attainment for these pupils in writing and mathematics at greater depth was below national averages. Work in pupils' books shows that learning at the greater depth standards is inconsistent.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils in reading, writing

and mathematics, but this is not swift enough to help these pupils meet year group expectations. However, there is some recent evidence of improvement due to better-quality, small-group teaching.

- Younger pupils read confidently, but do not have a sufficiently well-developed understanding to check that what they have read makes sense. They use their phonics well to read unknown words. Older pupils read with confidence. Their reading is fluent and expressive. Pupils' comprehension skills are improving following the recent review by senior leaders, which resulted in a much stronger focus on this aspect of reading.
- Writing, including writing across the curriculum, is improving across the school due to a consistent approach to the teaching of grammar and sentence structure. Opportunities are provided for pupils to deepen their understanding of English and mathematics and broaden their knowledge across a wide range of curriculum areas, through creative cross-curricular topics. Pupils in Year 5 made important connections between their mathematics work on mass and the effect on their weight of the size of the different planets.
- Work in pupils' books shows an improving picture. However, there are inconsistencies in progress and attainment across Years 1 to 4. In these classes, work is not well matched to pupils' learning needs. Consequently, pupils repeat work that they have already understood or attempt work that they find too difficult.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check in 2016 continued to rise. Phonics is taught well in key stage 1 and to identified pupils in key stage 2 as a result of better teaching and a revised curriculum that meets pupils' needs better.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving rapidly due to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Work is well matched to pupils' identified learning needs. Teaching assistants have undertaken training to improve their skills and knowledge of individual pupils' needs and this has enabled them to tailor support better to meet specific needs.
- Pupils in upper key stage 2 are making improved progress and attaining higher levels in English and mathematics. They are expected to provide explanations and reasons for their thinking and this is deepening their knowledge and understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of the early years was broadly in line with the national average. This demonstrated an improving trend over the past three years.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. The early years leader has ensured that all staff are appropriately trained to identify and plan for individual children's needs. They use assessment information well to plan activities which capture children's imagination. The children are keen to participate in their learning. Leaders have recognised the importance of a partnership between home and school have encouraged parents into school to share the school's approaches to learning.
- Teaching and learning in the Reception class is well matched to the assessed needs of the majority of children. The most able and lower-attaining children are sufficiently

supported or challenged to make good progress in a range of activities. However, middle-ability children could be further challenged, especially in writing, where they could make better progress by writing longer sentences and including appropriate punctuation. Children are making good progress and are meeting school expectations for their development at this stage of the school year. An increasing number are exceeding these expectations. As a result of good provision, pupils are well prepared to start Year 1.

- Assessments of children's development are accurate. Staff have been trained to understand and use the school's data systems. This enables them to plan learning activities which are better matched to children's needs. Current Reception children are making at least typical progress and most are making more than this.
- Children are well looked after. Staff give children's safety a high priority and make sure that the statutory welfare requirements are met. Relationships between parents and staff are positive. Parents state that important information is shared so they know how well their children are learning.
- Children's behaviour is good. There is a wide range of activities which are well supported by staff. This enables children to become confident and enthusiastic learners.
- The classroom and outdoor area are well resourced, allowing children access to a range of learning experiences. Children understand the rules for selecting their own activities; they could confidently tell the inspectors that 'You need to wear a hi-vis jacket if you are going outside.'
- The most able children are insufficiently challenged to meet higher standards, especially in writing and physical development, because expectations are not high enough. Some pupils were riding tricycles in the outdoor area, even though they told inspectors that they could ride two-wheel bikes at home.

School details

Unique reference number	111188
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10032241

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Jones
Headteacher	Miss Kathryn Heyes
Telephone number	0151 424 3108
Website	www.moorfieldprimary.co.uk
Email address	head.moorfield@halton-borough.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is slightly larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are receiving support is below the national average.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the leadership team. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2016 and the current deputy

headteacher was appointed in November 2016. Other teachers across the school are also relatively new to their leadership roles.

- In 2016, the school did not meet the national floor targets for pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Some learning walks were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' work.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors met with pupils, formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, English leader, mathematics leader, special education needs coordinator, early years leader, teachers and the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; minutes of meetings; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils. Scrutiny of the website was also undertaken.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings and the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. The inspectors also took into account the 13 responses to a questionnaire for staff and two responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Vanessa MacDonald	Ofsted Inspector
Tina Cleugh	Ofsted Inspector
Liam Trippier	Ofsted Inspector

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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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