

Westfield Primary School

Clayton Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4TR

Inspection dates

6 June and 27–28 June 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards across the school have declined since the last inspection. Leaders have not addressed the areas for improvement.
- Inaccurate identification of pupils' starting points when they enter the school has resulted in a culture of low aspirations for what pupils are capable of achieving.
- The arrangements for holding leaders and teachers to account are lacking in rigour.
- Governors have provided insufficient challenge and have been too accepting of excuses for declining outcomes.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not challenge all pupils to achieve what they are capable of.
- Leaders and teachers have not taken effective action to rectify the gaps in pupils' learning. This is most obvious in writing.
- The proportion of most-able pupils who achieve what they should is not high enough.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and most-able pupils, do not routinely receive teaching that meets their needs.
- Assessment in the early years is misleading. Children have reached a greater level of development than teachers have identified.
- There are limited opportunities for outdoor play in the early years. This is holding the children back in their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has established a leadership team that has quickened the pace of improvements. There has been more improvement in the last 10 months than in the four years since the last inspection.
- Significant improvements in standards have been made in early years, the Year 1 phonics screening check and key stage 1.
- Focused training for staff has improved the teaching of reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have high aspirations for the personal development and welfare of pupils.
- Pupils are happy, enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They behave well and are considerate and courteous.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - establishing a culture of high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders and teachers to account with increased rigour.
- Improve standards across all year groups, bringing them closer to national averages, by:
 - ensuring that all baseline and subsequent assessments are accurate
 - making sure that teachers routinely meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that programmes of work address gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in basic writing skills.
- Further children's development and learning in the early years by:
 - enhancing opportunities for outdoor play.

An external review of governance 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

- The pace at which leaders have secured improvements has been slow. After the last inspection, standards across the school declined to well below national averages. The decline was especially sharp in early years and key stage 1. Leaders have stemmed this decline and standards have improved significantly.
- Low aspirations for what pupils are capable of achieving academically are endemic and have gone unchallenged for too long. They are at odds with the ambitious aspirations that leaders have for pupils' social and personal development, which are high.
- Arrangements to manage the performance of staff are not appropriate in relation to the experience of the staff and the stage of their career. Targets and actions are generic, and this limits the expectations that leaders have of staff.
- The headteacher has managed consecutive challenges over the past five years with professional empathy. The extent of these challenges has, at times, diverted attention away from school improvement. More recently, she has established and developed a leadership team that is enabling her to drive positive developments. While new to post, these leaders are dynamic and their actions have helped to bring about rapid changes for the better in a very short space of time.
- The pupil premium allocation focuses on the areas that need addressing, for example the teaching of phonics. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving and there is a direct link to where funding has been allocated.
- Leaders use the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities appropriately on additional resources and intervention. The effectiveness of this support is variable. Since their needs are not identified quickly enough, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not immediately experience teaching of sufficient quality to meet their various and often complex needs.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that pupils follow a curriculum that covers a range of subjects to broaden their horizons and whet their appetites. History and science are subjects that are universally popular among the pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop understanding of the world and the riches of our society.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted at every opportunity. The experiences for pupils are astutely planned and are underpinned by values found in a democratic and free society. Tolerance, kindness and respect are constant hallmarks of the pupils at this school.
- The additional sports premium funding is spent appropriately. It is used to offer a range of sporting opportunities that engage pupils, inspire them to achieve and encourage them to be enthusiastic about living healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders and other adults consider themselves on the frontline in terms of protecting pupils from becoming radicalised. Staff are confident in their knowledge and understanding, so are able to identify pupils who may be vulnerable to extremism and/or radicalisation. There are clear procedures in place, should adults have any concerns.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not routinely hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour. They know what the school does well, but have not provided the necessary challenge for leaders in the areas that have needed improving since the last inspection. Governors have confused asking questions with exercising challenge.
- The governing body has undergone numerous changes since the last inspection. The current governing body is committed to the school and is open to ways in which it can improve. There remain a number of vacancies on the governing body, but the skills and experience of current members are broad.
- Governors are unflinching and watchful in matters relating to safeguarding. Their knowledge and understanding are substantial.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and it is evident that they are given the highest priority in school.
- Leaders have ensured that all adults undergo frequent training and receive regular updates. Adults' knowledge and understanding of matters relating to safeguarding are secure. They know what signs to look out for and know exactly what procedures to follow.
- Records, including the single central record, are kept meticulously. Leaders, including governors, are tenacious in their dealings with external agencies to ensure that any referrals are dealt with speedily.
- Leaders are proactive in involving parents. There are multiple resources made available to parents on the school's website on how they can keep their children safe. The school is involved in some relevant projects, for example Operation Encompass. This initiative promotes the early sharing of information with schools to enable the provision of timely care and support for children who may be victims of domestic abuse.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inaccurate baseline assessments of pupils' learning have adversely affected the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are more able than the school's own information indicates. Consequently, the expectations that teachers have of pupils have been low.
- Low standards for pupils in early years and key stage 1 mean that pupils have gaps in their learning. For example, pupils' written work contains many basic grammatical and spelling errors, and the occasions for extended writing are too few.
- Teaching is variable. Teachers do not routinely challenge pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Too often, teachers give pupils additional tasks and mistake them for challenge. These tasks are merely extra work rather than more challenging work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective additional support in the classroom. While this makes a positive difference to their

progress, it is not consistently coupled with strong teaching.

- The best teaching excites and enthuses the pupils, and develops their knowledge and understanding. In these classes, the progress made by pupils is faster and sustained.
- Teachers and pupils have purposeful relationships. Pupils feel comfortable in making mistakes and asking for help when needed.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy. The homework given is meaningful and fits in with pupils' learning at school.
- Parents are provided with a thorough overview of how well their children are progressing. The reports are easy to read and provide parents with manageable and specific ways in which they can help their children to improve. Parents appreciate the efforts that leaders have made to explain how their children are taught reading, writing and mathematics. Parents feel that they are equipped to help their children to learn at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. They have a developed understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are aware of the many ways in which children are exposed to unsafe situations and what to do if they have any concerns or worries.
- Pupils say that when bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively. Leaders follow up all incidents of bullying and spend a considerable amount of time seeking to resolve situations to the benefit of all involved.
- Leaders and adults take every opportunity to celebrate the successes of pupils. Without exception, there is a piece of artwork from every pupil on the walls of the school. Both parents and pupils value the manner in which rewards are used. This is having a positive impact on the self-esteem of the pupils.
- Leaders routinely seek to promote the well-being of pupils and their families. There is innovative work on mental health. For example, leaders have secured a 'listening therapist' who is helping pupils to develop their communication skills and personal and social development.
- Pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning. A small minority can become easily distracted and go on to interrupt the learning of others. Teachers do not always deal with these occurrences in a timely manner.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The pupils are calm and conduct themselves well in the corridor and in the playground. It is very clear that they get on with each other and enjoy each other's company.
- Attendance is close to the national average. There was a significant increase in the

proportion of pupils who regularly miss school in 2016. Concerted and tenacious efforts to tackle this have been successful, and this group of pupils is now relatively small.

- Although, historically, there have been no exclusions at this school, in the past academic year the headteacher has had to exclude a number of pupils. The records indicate that these decisions were taken very much as a last resort.
- Individual leaders are able to provide an overview of the standard of behaviour in the school. However, behaviour incidents are not consistently logged. This prevents leaders from having a shared understanding of any trends in behaviour and how these might be addressed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the past four years, outcomes for pupils declined in phonics and key stage 1 to standards well below the national average. Standards in writing across the school were low.
- During this period, the most able pupils did not achieve well across any key stage or subject. This was compounded by limited aspirations for these pupils. This was an area for improvement in the last inspection.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, attained poorly at key stage 1. At key stage 2, the disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Over time, achievement in science has been low and current pupils continue to underperform. Leaders have not capitalised on science being one of the pupils' favourite subjects.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check was significantly below the national average in 2016. After a three-year trend of declining standards, the provisional results for 2017 show a marked improvement.
- This bleak picture of recent years has brightened considerably this academic year. Provisional results indicate vast improvements in phonics and end of key stage 1 tests. Work in pupils' books at key stage 2 is more in line with age expectations. However, there is still some way to go until pupils achieve well.
- The progress that current pupils have made in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is similar to the national average. This is as a result of staff training to improve the expertise of teachers.
- More pupils are working at greater depth, but the proportion is lower than the national average. Leaders acknowledge that there are gaps in the knowledge of these pupils. The whole-school drive focusing on the most able has made modest improvements.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in school are making good progress. This is because of the effectiveness of the targeted support and strategies funded by the pupil premium allocation.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making variable rates of progress. Too much is dependent on the effectiveness of individual teachers.
- The work to improve phonics is paying dividends. Pupils are reading with greater

fluency and understanding. Pupils' use of vocabulary when writing is improving.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Too many children are inaccurately identified as joining Reception with skills below those typical for their age. This gives a skewed picture of what children are capable of, and restricts their learning and development as they move through the school.
- Outside provision for children does not provide them with a range of experiences and opportunities to develop their learning.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been below the national average for three years. Provisional figures for 2017 show a significant improvement that matches inspectors' observations. However, the most able children are not reaching their full potential.
- Leaders in the early years have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Since taking on the role in September, the early years leader has set about tackling the areas that require improvement.
- The majority of children are making progress. Children are increasingly fluent speakers and were very keen to talk to inspectors about what they were learning. A group of children wanted inspectors to join in their game and gave very strict instructions about what inspectors were to say.
- Relationships between staff and children, and among the children themselves, are kind and caring. The Reception class is a welcoming environment of friendly and smiley children. The children are happy and well cared for.
- Children are motivated and listen very carefully to adults. They are keen to learn and love to please their teachers.
- Disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are attentively tracked and benefit from the focused strategies to ensure that anything that gets in the way of their learning is addressed. There is little difference between the progress made by disadvantaged children and their peers.
- Leaders have worked hard to engage parents in their children's learning. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning at home and leaders take every opportunity to welcome them into school and learn how they can help their children.
- All of the welfare requirements are met, and the whole-school safeguarding procedures and practices apply to the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	111240
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10024283

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	Community school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Le-Surf
Headteacher	Claire Dawes
Telephone number	01928 572343
Website	www.westfieldprimaryschool.com
Email address	head.westfield@halton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized-primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is more than double the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- There are no Nursery classes. Children attend the Reception class full time.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable staff changes at all levels.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, sometimes with members of the leadership team.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books with senior leaders and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and governors. The inspectors also spoke to representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 45 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. 14 parents completed the free-text box. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. They also took account of the questionnaire responses from four staff. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information, including the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. An inspector also looked at arrangements and records for safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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