

Matthew Arnold Primary School

Dingle Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 9UB

Inspection dates

14–15 November 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

- Leaders' evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness is too generous. Plans to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are not rigorous enough.
- Middle leaders do not play a big enough part in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have declined over time. From their starting points, current key stage 2 pupils make less progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing.
- Teaching is inconsistent and does not always take account of pupils' starting points. As a result, pupils make too little progress and do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- New leadership arrangements have not led to consistently good teaching and outcomes for children in the early years.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make strong enough progress compared to other pupils nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders, including governors, have brought much needed stability to the school following a period of uncertainty and falling standards. The new headteacher is taking effective steps to improve the school.
- Leaders have worked effectively to promote pupils' personal development and welfare. As a result, pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school remains good. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful.
- Pastoral leadership is effective. Leaders and all staff ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported. As a result, pupils feel safe and their attendance has improved.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders have a more accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the strength of pupils' outcomes
 - equipping middle leaders with the skills and confidence to take greater responsibility for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the areas or subjects to which they have been assigned
 - ensuring that the use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has a greater impact on these pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure good outcomes by:
 - ensuring that pupils' mathematical skills and their knowledge of different calculation methods are developed and embedded across each key stage to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics
 - providing work that presents an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils which enables them to make stronger progress, particularly in key stage 1
 - ensuring that lessons take full account of pupils' starting points, particularly where disadvantaged pupils are concerned.
- Ensure that teaching meets the needs of all children in the early years so that more children achieve a good level of development by:
 - planning learning that builds more readily on each child's starting point
 - increasing the challenge for all children, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

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

- Since the appointment of the headteacher and new governors, much needed stability has been brought to the school following a period of declining standards after the previous inspection. Appointed in January 2016, the headteacher has improved the culture of the school, raised morale and tackled successfully many issues, such as pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare. The school is now well placed to improve further.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has strengthened since the arrival of the new headteacher. However, middle leaders do not currently have the skills and experience to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility. Their work is at an early stage of development and has not had a significantly positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' evaluations of pupils' outcomes and of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are overgenerous. Leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils perform compared to pupils in other schools nationally. As a result, leaders' plans for improving pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching lack rigour.
- The management of teachers' performance has improved. Teachers are set targets and these take account of pupils' starting points in different subjects. Staff benefit from a tailored offer of training which is well matched to improving pupils' outcomes.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively. Leaders track the progress of these pupils and there is a strategic oversight of provision across the school. Pupils who attend the speech and language class receive effective support and make good progress from their starting points.
- However, leaders have not developed an effective approach to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They have used the additional pupil premium funding for a range of extra support. However, the impact on attainment and progress is not measured precisely enough across the school.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Almost all pupils engage in a range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. There are many 'pupil leaders' in the school for areas such as sports, attendance, reading, mathematics and ecology. Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities.
- Leaders make good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is particularly reflected in pupils' conduct. Displays around school celebrate pupils' work around themes such as remembrance. Pupils study a range of different countries and the associated religions. They also have a good understanding of the rule of law. There is also a well-established school council which promotes pupils' understanding of democracy. Consequently, pupils have a firm understanding of British values and leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that the physical education (PE) and sport premium is very effectively deployed. A sports specialist organises sports clubs and helps to develop teachers'

skills. All teachers deliver PE lessons and pupil participation in sport is high.

- The local authority has provided considerable support to the school over the last three years. This has helped to stabilise the school and to halt a further decline in standards.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding is fully effective in improving pupils' outcomes. Although diminishing, the difference is too wide between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- New governance arrangements have been established since the previous inspection. The chair of the governing body provides strong leadership for this dedicated group of people. Governors have a wide range of skills and this helps to support the school on its journey of improvement. They are well placed to hold leaders to account and have an accurate view of the school's priorities.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is effective. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding in which pupils say they feel safe. Parents endorse these sentiments.
- The governing body is skilled and diligent in its responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Leaders ensure that all staff understand safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff ensure that pupils are safe. They have a good awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff understand procedures to follow should they have any concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Administrative staff ensure that records are complete and that required information relating to pupils, staff and governors is kept secure and up to date. Vetting procedures are robust and ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent, but improving. Lessons do not regularly take account of pupils' starting points and the latest information on pupils' progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers do not routinely check on pupils' progress within lessons and provide additional support where necessary. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of.
- The teaching of mathematics has been weak over time. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to grasp the basic skills of mathematics, such as calculating and reasoning to solve problems. As a result, not enough pupils achieve the standard expected for their age when they leave Year 6.
- The work set for pupils does not always provide enough challenge. When this happens, pupils lose interest, the quality of their work deteriorates and they do not make strong enough progress.
- Leaders have effective systems to collect information about pupils' progress. However, this information is not used consistently to inform teaching and the next steps in pupils'

learning.

- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They support pupils well, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- There are pockets of effective teaching in some year groups. Pupils' progress is stronger when teachers plan lessons that pupils find engaging and challenging. As an example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils were encouraged to demonstrate their creative and descriptive language to bring photographs to life. In this lesson, lower-ability and disadvantaged pupils were supported well and made as much progress as their classmates.
- The teaching of phonics has improved following a period where phonics standards were low. Pupils use their phonics skills to break down unfamiliar words to help with their reading. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils reach the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- Pupils are benefiting from a whole-school focus on reading. Leaders have invested heavily to ensure that pupils have access to books and to authors whose work interests them. More pupils are reading with confidence, fluency and expression. The school is working hard to instil a love of reading at home as well as in school.
- Relationships between pupils and staff create a good climate for learning. Pupils work well together because of their good personal development. Work in pupils' books is well presented.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the speech and language class is good. Pupils make good progress in the resourced provision. This is because teachers plan lessons which stimulate engagement and focus on the skills that pupils need to succeed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- Pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff and governors have ensured that the school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils. Pupils are friendly, confident, sociable and inquisitive about visitors to the school.
- Pupils enjoy playing and engaging with each other at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They have access to equipment and resources so they can play games together. They also enjoy using quiet areas, including in classrooms, where they can sit and talk with friends.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils explain what they should do if they are concerned about what they access on the internet.
- The new school council and the numerous pupil leaders make a strong contribution to school life. This has recently included discussions about the design of the curriculum, improvements in catering and equipment for the playground. This is supporting leaders in taking actions to make improvements.
- Pupils confidently answer questions and share their ideas during whole-class

discussions and in assemblies. During anti-bullying week, pupils participated in many activities to demonstrate and celebrate their commitment to getting along together, regardless of any differences. Pupils and staff actively celebrate people's differences.

- Parents recognise the improvements made to the school by the senior leadership team. Almost all parents say that their children are well cared for and feel safe. Some parents commented on how much their children looked forward to coming to school and that they enjoyed learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond to leaders' high expectations. Consequently, parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved significantly over the last two years. Pupils' positive behaviour enables almost all lessons to run smoothly. However, there are still occasional instances of poor behaviour, particularly when pupils' interest in learning wanes.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly, showing courtesy and respect for adults and each other.
- Leaders know pupils well and provide effective support for those pupils with identified social, emotional and behavioural needs. This includes the deployment of teaching assistants, who help pupils to focus on tasks. Leaders work well with outside agencies to seek specialist advice. They use this advice effectively to meet the needs of individuals.
- Pupils' good understanding of bullying was demonstrated during an assembly to celebrate anti-bullying week. Pupils explained that bullying is rare. When it happens, they say it is dealt with quickly.
- Leaders' unrelenting approach to reducing absence and persistent absenteeism is having a strong impact. The attendance team ensure that absence is followed up every day using 'first day calling' and home visits. The school provides breakfast clubs, which are well attended. There is a reward system to recognise high attendance and the school has built strong relationships with families to tackle poor attendance. Pupils' attendance has improved and is currently in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils whose learning suffers through persistently low attendance is reducing quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the last three years, pupils' attainment has been low. Pupils' progress over that time has been too slow. Although there was an improvement in 2017, too many pupils still do not do as well as they might.
- In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 who achieved the standards expected in reading and mathematics was below the national average. Despite improvement in 2017, the progress pupils make in key stage 1 remains inconsistent and is not improving quickly enough.
- In key stage 2, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and writing improved in 2017, but remained below the national average. Although pupils are making stronger progress in reading and writing in key stage 2,

there are variations for different groups of pupils. For example, disadvantaged pupils do not make strong enough progress compared with other pupils nationally.

- As a result of consistently poor teaching since the last inspection, too many pupils underperform in mathematics. Plans to fill gaps in pupils' learning, for example in reasoning skills, have not been implemented quickly enough.
- In a wide range of subjects, including science, history, geography, art, design technology and languages, pupils' progress is inconsistent. Leaders have implemented a new, improved curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to extend their learning in more subjects. However, the latest assessment information shows that pupils make inconsistent progress in different subjects across year groups.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because they are well supported in lessons and receive additional support to address their specific needs. This also includes the pupils who attend the on-site speech and language class.
- Although outcomes for most-able pupils are improving, at all ages, not enough have opportunities to exceed expectations.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills that are below those typical for their age. New leadership arrangements mean that the early years provision is improving. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is still inconsistent. As a result, teaching does not always build on children's starting points and strengths, so their progress is limited.
- The proportion of children moving into Year 1 having achieved a good level of development has been consistently low in recent years. Rates of progress vary for different groups of children, particularly for those who are disadvantaged. This group of children do not always make as much progress as they should.
- The quality of interactions between adults and children is inconsistent. When interactions work well, adults ask questions which challenge and extend children's learning. On other occasions, adults supervise rather than interact and engage with children. This prevents children from extending their learning as much as they could.
- When teaching is well planned, children have opportunities to complete activities which build on what they know and can do. As an example, in work linked to the 'bear hunt', children used clearly defined areas to investigate, paint and draw. In these situations, children enjoy their learning and make better progress.
- Nursery and Reception classes take place in a stimulating environment. Children share a new, improved outside space set up to provide activities in all areas of learning. This gives children access to a broad range of experiences and enables younger children to learn from older children.
- Children behave well in lessons. Almost all children sustain their interest in chosen activities and play well together. Children cooperate and work together well.
- Staff make sure that children are safe, both indoors and outside. Routines are clear and well established, which means that children settle quickly into school. Children use

equipment and move around their environment safely. Levels of supervision are good.

- Effective support, including one-to-one supervision, is provided for children who have SEN and/or disabilities. This enables these children to access tasks, interact with their classmates and to make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	104557
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10037760

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Adams
Headteacher	Mr Tim Byrne
Telephone number	01515 390300
Website	www.matthewarnold.co.uk
Email address	admin@matthewarnold.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Currently, the school has above average numbers of pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Above average numbers of pupils speak English as an additional language or are in the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class and attended a school assembly. Two joint lesson observations took place with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities, four governors (including the chair of the governing body) and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- An inspector heard pupils read in key stage 1 and the early years.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information, minutes from governors' meetings, the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness, and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including some free-text comments.

Inspection team

Gary Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nusret Ellahi	Ofsted Inspector
Saeeda Ishaq	Ofsted Inspector

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