

Fender Primary School

New Hey Road, Woodchurch, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 8HB

Inspection dates

11–12 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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 and governors have not ensured that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make consistently good progress across the school.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils' progress are, at times, not high enough. Sometimes activities do not closely meet pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The standards that pupils reach at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 remain below national averages.
- Leaders and governors are aware of the challenges that the school faces. However, at times, this focus limits their ambition for further improvement.
- Children in the early years do not make consistently good progress from their typically low starting points. Assessment information is not used well enough to plan activities that build on what children already know and can do.
- Pupils' attendance is below average and has been so for the last three years. Persistent absence, although improving, is above national averages.
- Leaders' systems for sharing information about the identification and monitoring of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not ensure that all leaders have the most accurate picture of provision.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' initiatives to improve progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to have a positive impact. As a result, standards are rising.
- Pupils attending the school's resourced base make good progress. They are well supported by skilled staff who know their needs and abilities and provide learning that closely matches these.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn in a range of subjects. Pupils' personal development is effectively promoted through the curriculum.
- Leaders work effectively to promote the school's values and to develop pupils' confidence and positive attitudes to learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and their attainment, including for disadvantaged pupils and children in early years, by ensuring that:
 - learning more consistently provides the right level of challenge for all pupils
 - staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' progress and achievement
 - activities are more closely matched to pupils' skills and abilities.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - refining plans to improve teaching so that attainment continues to rise
 - ensuring that all leaders have high expectations of pupils' outcomes
 - raising pupils' attendance and further reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent
 - ensuring that procedures to identify and monitor the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are strengthened to give all leaders a more accurate picture of provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors, over time, have not secured teaching that meets the needs of all pupils well enough to promote consistently strong progress. Although pupils' progress and standards are now rising, leaders' plans for improvement have not had a strong enough impact on standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, or on ensuring that enough pupils attend school regularly.
- Leaders' initiatives to increase progress and standards in reading are beginning to bear fruit. Work to develop pupils' understanding of books and their speaking skills is improving provision. Progress and standards for current pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are improving.
- Leaders have clear systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching. This has led to improvements in, for example, the teaching of writing. However, measures to raise expectations and challenge across subjects, and to develop problem-solving skills in mathematics, have not made enough difference. As a result, the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school.
- Leaders carefully track pupils' progress and identify those pupils who are falling behind. This monitoring is increasingly effective. This is helping teachers to see their own effectiveness and to improve where they need to. The school's system of performance management holds staff to account for the achievement of pupils in their class.
- Middle leadership has developed since the last inspection, with some leaders attending training to improve their skills. The leaders of English and mathematics have led initiatives to improve teaching and progress in their subjects. Although some improvements are evident, these measures have not had a strong impact on raising progress and standards.
- Pupil premium funding is spent largely on additional staffing to ensure that pupils are taught in smaller classes or groups. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in the school. This means that differences between the progress of this group and others nationally, although improving, are not diminishing quickly enough.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is tracked and monitored, and that suitable support is put in place to promote learning. As a result, pupils in the school's resourced provision make good progress in their learning. Other pupils in the school who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress which varies but is often better than for other pupils in the school.
- Leaders' systems for the identification and tracking of progress of mainstream pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not always ensure that leaders have the most accurate picture of provision.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting for pupils. Pupils' learning includes a range of subjects and the school's 'linking our thinking' approach to cross-curricular learning ensures that pupils learn to apply their skills in other subjects. Pupils' learning is enriched by visits in the locality to, for example, Birkenhead Park.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies, planned discussions and activities to share the school's values. A regular focus on values such as respect, faith and acceptance helps to develop pupils' awareness of the importance of tolerance. Pupils show respect for others and an acceptance of difference.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very supportive of the school. They are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of provision, including pupils' progress and standards. They visit the school regularly to observe provision for themselves.
- Governors often ask searching questions about the information that they are given. Although they are keen for the school to improve, a focus on the challenges faced by the school limits their expectations.
- Governors are aware of how funding is spent. They keep a close eye on finances to ensure that the budget is appropriately allocated.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety is a key focus for all staff. Staff training is up to date and includes, for example, training in the 'Prevent' duty. All staff are familiar with the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a pupil.
- Leaders and staff take appropriate action where they have concerns about a pupil. They liaise with outside agencies and work well to support families in need.
- Leaders focus well on ensuring that pupils develop a good awareness of how to keep safe. This includes learning about risks from taking 'selfies', sexting, and risks in the local area such as gaming and addiction.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. Over time, teaching leads to good progress for those pupils who attend the school's resourced base. For other pupils, teachers do not consistently use assessment information well to embed challenge in their lessons. At times, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve from their respective starting points.
- The teaching of reading is improving. This is encouraging more pupils in key stage 2 to enjoy reading and to read more widely. Younger pupils' understanding of their reading is also improving. However, at times reading books for younger pupils do not provide sufficient challenge to develop their skills.
- Staff confidence in the teaching of writing is improving. However, at times, expectations are too low, and activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities. For example, key stage 1 pupils spend too much time completing activities and repeating skills that they have already mastered.

- Teaching has focused on improving pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics. There is evidence that this is beginning to improve pupils' understanding and progress, but this is not embedded throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress.
- Teaching in the resourced provision is very carefully tailored to support pupils' learning. Staff are skilled in adapting their teaching to meet the varied needs of individuals. As a result, these pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Staff establish positive relationships with pupils. They successfully encourage pupils to have positive attitudes to their learning and to work hard.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school works very well to support the most vulnerable pupils and their families and understand their needs. Staff are caring and always mindful of the need to promote pupils' well-being. A dedicated home-school link worker provides support to pupils and their families who may need additional help.
- The emphasis leaders and staff place on encouraging pupils' self-esteem and respect for each other has paid dividends. Pupils are welcoming and accepting of others. They grow in confidence during their time at Fender Primary and this contributes to their positive attitudes to learning.
- Most pupils say that they enjoy school. They show a pride in their school and this is reflected in the good standard of presentation in their books.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know how to keep safe when online and show an awareness of dangers in the local area. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school and know that there is an adult they could talk to if they had any concerns.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare in school, but that if it happens staff will sort it out.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils generally behave well both in lessons or around the school. Where learning is not fully meeting their needs, pupils can become restless and distracted and lose focus.
- Not enough pupils attend school regularly. Attendance has remained below national averages for the last three years. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is above national averages.
- The school works hard to address this issue. The work of leaders and the home-school link worker to improve attendance is wide-ranging. It is beginning to show impact in reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Throughout the school, the rate of pupils' progress is variable. Progress overall is not good enough and reflects inconsistencies in teaching over time.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have been below national averages since 2016. Progress at the end of key stage 2 has varied but in 2017 was weak in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics.
- Current pupils are making variable progress. Overall, progress is improving, particularly in reading. The improvements to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to raise standards in some year groups. The provisional, unvalidated national test data for 2018 indicates that reading and writing standards at the end of Year 6 have improved.
- Phonics outcomes are not as good as they need to be. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has, in 2016 and 2017, improved towards the national average. The most recent data for 2018 shows a dip from previous years.
- Pupils who join the school other than at the usual times are helped to settle well. Their progress, as with other pupils in school, is variable.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in the school. Progress is improving but is still inconsistent. It is not sufficient to ensure that the differences between disadvantaged pupils' progress and standards and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing quickly enough.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities attending the school's resourced provision make good progress in their learning due to skilled, effective teaching. The progress of other pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is more variable due to inconsistencies in teaching over time. The school's current progress data and analysis of pupils' work indicate that this group of pupils is making better progress than other pupils in the main school.
- The most able pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable due to a lack of challenge in their learning.
- Pupils are well prepared for the transfer to secondary school in terms of their good personal development and positive attitudes to learning. However, the below-average standards that they reach at the end of key stage 2 mean that some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their learning as they could be.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children join the Reception class with skill levels that are below those typical for their age. This is particularly the case for children's communication and language skills. Teaching is not strong enough to ensure that children make enough progress to catch up. As a result, a below-average proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. This means that some children are not well prepared for the transfer to Year 1.

- Staff provide children with a range of activities that interest them and help to promote their learning. For example, children enjoyed looking at minibeasts and discussing their findings. However, children's learning is not consistently well promoted through challenge to develop their ideas and thinking.
- Staff track children's learning and use this information to plan activities that generally meet needs well. However, at times, expectations for learning are not precisely matched to children's capabilities. For example, some children who struggle to write a simple sentence independently are asked to do this as part of their session to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds.
- The early years leader has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Assessments of children's learning are accurate, but leaders do not consistently ensure that these are used to provide activities that develop learning to the full and ensure good progress.
- Staff establish positive, warm relationships with children. As a result, children grow in confidence and feel secure in school. This confidence makes a positive contribution to children's interest in learning and their progress.
- Staff work well to involve parents in their children's learning. Parents contribute to their children's learning journals and are supported to develop opportunities for learning at home. This positive partnership contributes to the progress that children make.
- Staff provide children with a safe, secure environment in which to learn. Adults have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and know how to identify and take action where children may be at risk.

School details

Unique reference number	105039
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10046709

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Dealasalle
Headteacher	Louise Seargeant
Telephone number	01516 770 425
Website	http://fender-wirral.frogos.net/app/os#!website/home
Email address	schooloffice@fender.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2013

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is above the national average.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school each year.
- The school is resourced by its local authority to provide a 16-place provision for pupils who have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder. The provision is split into two bases which provide long- and short-term placements for pupils who have an

education, health and care plan and come from other primary schools across the local authority.

- 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

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and four other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority, the school's independent consultant, and the headteacher of the local high school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of 10 parents who sent responses via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 50 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector

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