

Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery

Hallwood Park Avenue, Hallwood Park, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2FL

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2018

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| 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 | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. This weakens the progress that pupils make.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable. As a result, not enough pupils do well for their age across the curriculum.
- Middle leaders in subjects other than mathematics and English are inexperienced in leadership. They are developing the skills required to enable them to have a greater impact on teaching and learning.
- In mathematics, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- When writing, pupils do not use their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills consistently.
- In the early years, some children do not make the progress that they should, particularly in reading and writing.
- The outdoor area in the early years does not provide high-quality activities for children in some areas of learning.
- Attendance of pupils is too low. Leaders have taken positive steps to improve attendance, but some pupils miss school regularly. This affects their learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's website meets statutory requirements.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads a happy, caring and nurturing school. Staff are committed to improving outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' welfare and well-being take a very high priority. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, receive carefully planned support. As a result, they achieve well.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils are safe in school.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting trips and activities which have a positive effect on their personal development.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn to value differences and care for others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - securing consistently good teaching across the school
 - developing the roles of middle leaders so that they have a greater influence on improving outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that the school’s website makes available all information required by law for parents and carers.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are consistently challenged to enable them to do well for their age across the curriculum
 - in mathematics, giving pupils more frequent opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - in writing, ensuring that pupils use their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately.
- Raise attendance to at least the national average.
- Improve the progress of children in the early years by:
 - providing more opportunities for children in the outdoor area to develop their early skills, particularly in reading and writing
 - ensuring that teachers plan high-quality, challenging and frequent opportunities which match children’s interests and develop their skills in reading and writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The quality of leadership and management requires improvement because leaders and managers have not secured a consistently good quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. As a result, not enough pupils make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Across the curriculum, the most able pupils do not do well for their age.
- The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the governing body share a determination to raise standards across the school. They have developed an accurate system of assessment and have used this to identify the areas for improvement.
- To address inconsistencies in pupils' progress, the leadership team has put in place a detailed policy for teaching and learning, which sets out leaders' expectations for teachers. This has led to improvements in learning, including in phonics and reading.
- The skills of middle leaders are at an early stage of development, and so they have not taken action to improve pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders have planned training for teachers and staff which is closely matched to identified areas for development. The impact of this support is reflected in improving outcomes for pupils in phonics and reading. Leaders have planned valuable opportunities for staff to work with other professionals and other schools to share good practice and develop their skills. Leaders have identified that further training is needed for teachers, for example to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics and to improve the skills of middle leaders.
- The headteacher leads a happy and enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff. They are keen to achieve the very best for all pupils and they provide a nurturing and safe environment.
- Leaders have planned an engaging curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning to play different instruments and performing to an audience. Leaders provide a range of interesting and exciting trips which develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Through residential trips in Years 3, 5 and 6, staff give pupils opportunities to take part in challenging activities, including abseiling, climbing and ghyll scrambling. Pupils spoke with excitement about how much they had enjoyed these experiences. Leaders use links with local businesses, for example a bakery and the zoo in Chester, to enhance teaching in subjects including science and geography.
- Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to address pupils' barriers to learning. The provision of a free breakfast club means that pupils are ready to start their learning each day. Additional emotional and well-being support is in place for vulnerable pupils. Leaders check the progress of disadvantaged pupils and make sure that extra provision matches their varied needs.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is experienced and enthusiastic. She uses additional funding well to provide carefully planned support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. When needed, the school seeks useful external support

from other professionals.

- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through carefully planned lessons and assemblies. Pupils learn to be inclusive and to welcome and value people with differences, including ethnicity and religion.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is dedicated and knowledgeable. Governors have a range of skills and relevant experience. They demonstrate a commitment to the school and the wider community.
- Governors keep their skills up to date by attending regular training, including safeguarding training. They have taken action to improve the safety of the school building.
- Governors know the school very well and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They use their skills to check on the effectiveness of teaching and provide effective challenge to leaders, for example in improving provision in the early years. Governors share the headteacher's determination and ambition to further improve teaching and learning so that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- At the time of the inspection, the school's website did not contain the full range of information for parents which is statutorily required, including information about governance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including record-keeping. Statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in school. Appropriate checks are made on visitors when they arrive at the school and they are given useful information about safeguarding.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' safety is a high priority and that staff are vigilant. They make sure that staff receive regular and appropriate training to identify any signs of possible danger or potential abuse. Leaders have created a safe and caring culture in which pupils feel confident that they have someone to talk with if they are worried. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they feel safe in school.
- The procedures for reporting any incidents or concerns are very clear and understood by staff who provide timely support when pupils are at risk. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school and in different subject areas. Not enough pupils make consistently good progress, including in writing and mathematics. In some classes, teachers do not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils.

- Leaders have taken steps to improve the effectiveness of teaching in mathematics across the school, and pupils' progress is improving. Teachers plan frequent activities to help pupils to develop their confidence in number, including understanding place value and recording calculations. Pupils calculate with confidence and accuracy. However, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills and to tackle tricky work. This means that some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils develop their phonics skills and read with confidence and fluency. They are able to use their knowledge to sound out unknown words. Teachers and teaching assistants check pupils' learning regularly to ensure that phonics teaching is closely matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils falling behind are given extra support to get them back on track.
- Teachers plan lessons which develop pupils' reading comprehension. Pupils read regularly and they are taught reading skills such as inference and prediction. However, not enough of the most able pupils do well for their age in their reading. This is because teachers do not plan enough activities to develop the skills of the most able pupils.
- Many teachers have improved how they teach writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils write with confidence and their handwriting is neat and well formed. Pupils develop their use of varied vocabulary to make their writing interesting to read. However, in some classes, teachers' expectations for pupils are too low and pupils do not use their handwriting, spelling and grammar skills consistently when writing independently.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by trips and visits and teachers plan engaging lessons. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson, pupils' imagination was captured by watching an exciting and thought-provoking film clip. However, teachers do not plan opportunities to develop the skills of the most able pupils across the curriculum and few pupils do well for their age.
- Inspection evidence and the school's assessment information show that disadvantaged pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with other pupils in the school. Their progress is in line with other pupils nationally.
- Across the school, teachers and teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Staff know these pupils well and support individuals and small groups with their learning. The SENCo keeps a careful check on this group of pupils. She ensures that the work that teachers plan matches pupils' needs. As a result, this group of pupils make good progress from their varied starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- Staff's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Nurture and well-being lie at the heart of the school's ethos. Leaders have created a calm and welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school offers breakfast provision free of charge, and this is very well attended. Pupils are welcomed into school by friendly staff and start the day with a healthy breakfast.

- The school's attractive nurture unit, Rainbow Room, provides pupils with a calm, bright and engaging learning environment. Skilled and caring staff plan interesting lessons and opportunities which build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and develop their learning and social skills. This provision is highly valued by staff, parents and pupils, and has a positive impact on those pupils who attend.
- Staff teach pupils to value differences and to welcome all. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions, including Islam and Hinduism. They study key British values, including democracy and the rule of law. Through assemblies, staff teach pupils to understand these rules and to reflect them in their behaviour and respect for others.
- Pupils value the opportunities staff give them to take on leadership roles which develop their self-confidence. Applicants for the head boy and head girl positions make speeches in school assemblies and are interviewed by staff. Other pupils are elected by their classes to the school council. The head boy and head girl take on responsibilities, including showing visitors around school. Staff give pupils the role of 'junior safety officers', promoting pupils' safety online. Pupil 'play leaders' support younger pupils in the playground and encourage them to keep active. Through such opportunities, pupils learn to be thoughtful, caring and responsible citizens.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including online and in the wider community. Leaders arrange frequent visits and visitors to school, including the fire service and police. Through these assemblies and workshops, pupils learn about road safety, fire safety and first aid.
- The school works in partnership with the local authority's health improvement team to improve pupils' health and well-being. Older pupils take part in workshops about healthy eating, mental well-being and the dangers of misusing drugs and alcohol.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a clear understanding of how to choose a healthy lifestyle, including exercise. As part of the school's 'Healthy Heroes' work, pupils take part in regular inter-school sports competitions. At playtimes, staff encourage pupils to be active, taking part in a range of activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because whole-school attendance is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with persistent absence has risen and is above the national average. Leaders have been proactive in taking steps to improve attendance, including providing a breakfast club. Regular contact with parents, through letters, meetings and home visits, ensures that most parents understand how important it is for their children to attend school regularly. However, some pupils miss school too often.
- In previous years, the number of fixed-term exclusions has been well above the national average. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve behaviour across the school. As a result, the number of incidents of misbehaviour has fallen considerably.
- Pupils are polite and very welcoming. They greet visitors warmly. A strong ethos of care and respect between staff and pupils is evident across the school.
- Leaders have created a calm and friendly atmosphere. Pupils move around the school with consideration for others. At playtimes, pupils play well together and follow

instructions from adults. Pupils value calm and quiet areas in the school. For example, a 'calm corner' has been provided for pupils who want some quiet time to sit.

- In classes, pupils are keen to do their best and answer questions well. They quickly follow instructions from teachers. In a small number of classes, instances of off-task behaviour are a result of work being too easy for pupils or pupils having too little work to do.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare and that staff deal with any misbehaviour. Leaders have introduced a behaviour policy which pupils clearly understand. Staff, pupils and parents agree that pupils' behaviour has improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, the proportions of pupils reaching expected and higher standards by the end of Year 6 have remained below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in these subjects is in line with national averages, but not enough pupils make the strong progress needed to close the gap with other pupils nationally.
- Across different subjects and in different classes, pupils' progress is variable. The most able pupils do not make the strong progress of which they are capable and not enough pupils reach the higher standards.
- The school's results have improved in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This is because leaders have improved the consistency of how phonics is taught across classes. Staff carefully build on the sounds pupils have learned in previous lessons. Pupils read with fluency and they use their phonics knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. Staff provide those pupils working below the expected standard with carefully planned support to help them catch up. The vast majority of pupils enter key stage 2 with good phonics knowledge.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 have been consistently below national averages, although they are improving. In 2018, no pupil was working at greater depth by the end of Year 2. Across key stage 1, some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders use the pupil premium grant to improve outcomes for pupils. Disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with other pupils in school, although below other pupils nationally. They make good progress across key stage 2.
- The school's nurture unit has a positive impact on pupils' well-being and learning, including disadvantaged pupils. Leaders make careful checks on pupils' progress and these show that pupils achieve well in the nurture unit.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive carefully planned teaching to make sure that they make good progress from their varied starting points. The skilled SENCo ensures that these pupils improve their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start the early years with knowledge and skills which are below those typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception is lower than the national average. The progress of children is variable in reading and writing. Although most children make good progress across other areas of learning, they do not close the gaps from their below-average starting points in these areas. As a result, the majority of children are not well enough prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Leaders have an accurate and honest view of the improvements needed in the early years. They have provided training for staff and taken steps to improve the classroom environments and enhance children's opportunities to develop their skills. These improvements have had a positive impact, including in improving children's speech and language. Leaders recognise that the outdoor learning area needs further development to improve children's learning experiences. In the outdoors and the Reception classroom areas, children do not have enough opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills.
- In both the Nursery and Reception classes, adults have created a calm, nurturing and welcoming environment where each child is valued. One member of staff described the 'privilege' of caring for and teaching children in her class. Children settle very quickly into routines and enjoy being in school.
- In Nursery, the well-resourced and spacious classroom contains a range of interesting opportunities to play and learn. Staff plan engaging activities to support children's learning, including communication and language. During the inspection, children were playing cooperatively in the home corner, chatting happily as they prepared a meal. In the outdoor area, children were concentrating well, using paint brushes to develop their mark-making skills.
- In Reception, children are engaged in their learning. Adults support children's language development. They use questions and conversation to help children develop their understanding. However, the activities planned to develop children's learning are not consistently challenging and do not always match children's interests. This slows the progress that some children make, particularly in reading and writing.
- Leaders have clear systems to check how well children learn, including disadvantaged children and children who have SEN and/or disabilities. Observations and checks are made when children start school to make sure that adults have a good understanding of children's levels of knowledge and skill.
- Children are safe and looked after well. Adults teach children how to play well together, use equipment safely and move calmly around the classrooms. The environment is safe and secure, and all welfare requirements are met. Adults supervise children well in the indoor and outdoor classrooms and children listen to and follow instructions.
- Communication between school and parents is strong. Parents feel welcome and appreciate regular conversations with staff when their children start school. Parents are invited regularly into school to help them support their children's learning.
- There is an appropriate system in place to make sure that children make a smooth and successful start to school. During the inspection, new starters to school were very well settled in their Nursery and Reception classes.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 111210 |
| Local authority | Halton |
| Inspection number | 10046378 |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 140 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Martin West |
| Headteacher | Kay Goodwin |
| Telephone number | 01928 716 336 |
| Website | www.hallwoodpark.co.uk/ |
| Email address | head.hallwoodpark@halton.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 15–16 October 2007 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair, and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with the head boy, the head girl and the school council and talked with pupils in classes and around the school.
- The inspectors listened to a small number of pupils read.
- A range of pupils' books and tracking records were scrutinised with the headteacher.
- An inspector spoke with several parents at the start of the school day to seek their views, and took into account parent feedback provided by school leaders.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Bevin

Ofsted Inspector

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