

Westminster Community Primary School

John Street, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 2ED

Inspection dates	14–15 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress, particularly in writing, is not consistently good throughout the school.
- The work that some teachers prepare for different groups does not meet their needs well enough. As a result, the lower ability and the most able do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply key mathematical skills in meaningful ways in order to deepen their understanding.
- Attainment is low in some year groups, partly as a result of weaker teaching in the past.
- Attendance is below the national average and levels of persistent absence are high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership by school leaders and governors is strongly improving the quality of teaching and speeding up pupils' progress.
- Recent improvements to the early years provision have ensured that children make good progress from their starting points.
- Attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has shown a rising trend of improvement.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Pupils are proud of their school and report that they feel safe. They behave well both in lessons and around school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils by:
 - sharing the good practice that exists in the teaching of writing
 - ensuring that expectations for learning are high, and that teaching more consistently meets the needs of different abilities, including the lower-ability children and most-able children
 - developing pupils' application of their mathematical skills in order to deepen their understanding.

- Improve leadership and management and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by working more closely with parents and others to improve levels of attendance and reduce persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders have successfully created a culture of high expectation and commitment to improvement which is shared by staff. Despite a number of staff changes, leaders have brought about improvements to the early years provision, attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check, progress in mathematics and pupils' interest and engagement in learning.
- The leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy headteacher since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked closely to establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Teachers are set clear targets for improvement. They have benefited from training, for example in mathematics, which has improved progress and attainment in this subject.
- After a period of instability in the autumn term of 2015, staffing is now more settled. Although the quality of teaching is improving quickly, it is not yet consistently good and leaders' work has not yet had a sufficiently positive impact on outcomes throughout the school.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum with positive impact on pupils' engagement in their learning and the quality of artwork produced. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enriched by visits, for example to local gardens, and by residential experiences. Pupils take part in events such as a whole-school dance day and model-making relating to study of Ted Hughes' novel 'The Iron Man'. Pupils benefit from a variety of after-school clubs such as cookery, athletics, rounders, football and dance.
- Pupils learn about British values. The school is very inclusive and pupils learn respect and tolerance for others. They develop an understanding of democracy through elections to the school council. They show a good understanding of different cultures, faiths and beliefs. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the sports premium funding is used well. Pupils benefit from swimming and gymnastics lessons, a variety of after-school sports clubs, and participation in inter-school sporting events.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide, for example, individual tuition and support a breakfast club and homework clubs. This has a positive impact on progress and eligible pupils make similar progress to their peers in school. However, measures to improve attendance have yet to raise attendance for this group overall. Leaders are keen to ensure the best possible use of this funding and have arranged an independent review to be carried out.
- Leaders have established positive relationships with parents. Most parents speak positively about the school. The majority of those who responded to Parent View thought that their children made good progress in school and were well cared for.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school in bringing about improvements since the last inspection. The school has benefited from the support of literacy and numeracy consultants and from links with a teaching school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are committed to school improvement. Since the last inspection, they have undertaken training to improve their skills and abilities in supporting and challenging school leaders. They now provide a good level of support and challenge.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school. They visit regularly and they have an informed view of teaching and learning. They have a good understanding of the progress that different groups of pupils make and the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rigorous policies and procedures are in place to ensure that staff and visitors are suitably checked and that any concerns about a pupil's welfare are followed through. Staff work well to ensure clear communication between staff, parents and outside agencies. Staff attend regular training to update their knowledge of how to protect pupils from harm, including the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not consistently good throughout the school. At times, work is not well enough matched to pupils' abilities, with the result that they do not make the progress of which they are capable. This means that sometimes lower-ability pupils are not fully engaged in their learning, or that the most able are not fully challenged. For example in key stage 2 mathematics, lower-ability pupils found participation in a number game difficult and so did not fully engage.
- The teaching of writing skills varies and as a result pupils' progress sometimes slows. Where expectations are high and work is well matched to abilities, pupils make good progress. At other times pupils make expected rather than good progress.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills in different contexts, such as writing a diary entry as part of work in history. However, there are fewer chances for them to apply and consolidate their mathematical skills.
- Where learning is best, staff provide activities which interest and challenge pupils. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoyed identifying the feelings of characters in a novel. They were questioned well to clarify the meanings of words they had suggested, such as 'abandoned' and 'isolated'.
- Staff provide feedback which makes clear to pupils what their next steps are and pupils respond positively. The school's marking policy is implemented well and, as a result, marking helps to promote pupils' progress.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught well in key stage 1. Pupils respond well to regular sessions which are tailored to their needs and abilities. They make good progress in this aspect of learning and show a growing ability to apply their knowledge in their reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There are many pupils in the school whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Staff and leaders work well to create a nurturing environment and ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They say that lessons are fun and enjoy trips out. Older pupils relish the chance to take part in the end-of-year school play. Pupils respond well to positions of responsibility such as head boy, head girl and school councillors.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They show a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that bullying is rare in school and where it happens it is dealt with well by staff.
- Pupils have positive relationships with staff and each other. They cooperate well together in lessons to share ideas. The school is harmonious and inclusive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because, despite the school's positive efforts, attendance is below average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than average. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. The school works closely with parents and the attendance officer to raise the attendance of those pupils whose attendance is below average levels. This has led to improvements for some individuals, but has yet to raise overall attendance sufficiently.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Off-task behaviour is rare and pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are polite, they are aware of school rules and the importance of following them.
- Good behaviour is also seen in the breakfast club, where pupils who attend have an enjoyable start to the school day.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils are not yet making consistently strong progress in all classes. Progress is variable and is weaker in writing than in other subjects.

- The rates of progress of groups of pupils vary from year to year, with the numbers of pupils in defined groups being very small. Disadvantaged pupils generally make progress at rates similar to others in the school. This means that over time, gaps are not closing quickly.
- The progress of the most able pupils varies. The 2015 national results showed an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of key stage 2, but in key stage 1 the proportions have remained below average. Current progress is variable as, at times, teaching is not closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Lower-ability pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of where activities are not adapted well enough to their capabilities.
- The results of national tests and assessments at the end of key stage 2 can appear to fluctuate year on year due to the relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group. Results in 2015 improved to broadly average from significantly below average in 2014.
- This year, assessment arrangements have changed, so it is harder to make a direct comparison with previous years. Also, this small cohort included a large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 working at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national averages and particularly so for reading.
- Evidence from pupils' books, observations of teaching and analysis of the school's data show that in some year groups current attainment is rising. Year 5 pupils, for example, are on track to attain close to or above expected levels by the end of Year 6.
- Progress in mathematics is improving. National data indicates that this has been a weaker area with progress in this subject significantly below the national averages in 2014 and 2015. Improvements to the teaching of mathematics are resulting in much better progress in most year groups.
- In the early years, children make good progress and the progress of current pupils in key stage 1 is steadily rising. Consequently, more pupils in Years 1 and 2 are reaching age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is closely monitored. They receive a positive level of support and as a result make similar progress to their peers.
- As a result of improvements in teaching, outcomes in phonics have improved. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard has risen this year to be in line with the national average.

Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the school with skills that are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and number skills. In the past, most children have not attained a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. However, since the appointment of a new early years leader, the quality of teaching has rapidly improved and this year, at 53%, the figure is much closer to the national average. This represents good progress for most children from their starting points.
- The early years is well led. The leader has an accurate view of provision and has implemented changes to the environment, teaching and assessment which have had a positive impact on children's progress.
- Children thrive in the stimulating environment provided. They excitedly engage in activities outside, making a pretend fire on which to cook 'fish' they have made. Children enthusiastically design and label their plans and then take part in deciding how to construct the fire from straw and wood.
- Staff question children well to challenge them and extend their learning. Children are encouraged to think how they might tie wooden rods together and how they could make this stand up when making their fire.
- Children's number skills are promoted well. Children who are 'fishing' using rods they have made are questioned effectively to extend their learning. For example, children who have caught six fish were asked how many more they would need to make 10.
- Children show a mature attitude to their learning, concentrating well alongside Year 1 pupils to design and make flags.
- Children behave well and are clearly secure in the class routines. They show confidence in talking to adults and show pride in the flags they have made.
- Staff have a good knowledge of children's capabilities and make regular assessments of their

learning. Progress is carefully tracked and any gaps identified are addressed. As a result, children make good progress in their learning. This includes disadvantaged pupils and the most able.

- Good liaison with parents helps children to settle when they join the school. Home visits help to establish positive relationships and contribute to a positive sharing of information. Parents feel well-informed about their children's progress and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. This helps to promote children's good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	111086
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10012111

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillipa Watton
Headteacher	Sue Finch
Telephone number	0151 3382224
Website	www.westminsterprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@westminsterprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, eligible for the pupil premium, is well above the national average. Pupil premium is the additional government funding used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school's website meets requirements for the publication of information.
- Since the last inspection, a deputy headteacher has been appointed and there have been several staff changes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning throughout the school. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector 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 inspector also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector 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. She considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- The inspector considered the 17 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the five parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted.
- The inspector also took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire to consider.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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