

Westminster Community Primary School

John Street, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 2ED

Inspection dates

11–12 September 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	Good
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

- Despite the sustained improvements in key stage 1, leaders and governors have not been as successful in ensuring that some older pupils in key stage 2 make consistently good progress across different subjects.
- A legacy of underachievement means that a significant proportion of older pupils lack the skills that they need in reading, writing and mathematics when starting secondary school.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account rigorously enough. They pay insufficient attention to how leaders' actions affect pupils' outcomes.
- On occasion, teachers do not use accurate assessment information to plan learning that allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers do not consistently plan learning that challenges pupils, particularly the most able. This is especially the case in mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their subject-specific skills in subjects such as history and geography.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have made strong improvements to teaching in the early years, key stage 1 and some aspects of key stage 2. This has ensured that pupils are now making stronger progress as they move through the school.
- This school is a safe haven for pupils. Pupils enjoy school and they feel safe.
- Children flourish in the early years. Teachers plan learning that is well matched to the needs of children.
- Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral support. Leaders' work to secure appropriate help and support for pupils and their families is exemplary. Staff have established strong links with parents.
- An increasing proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in phonics and in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. This reflects the improvements to teaching that have been made in these year groups.
- Pupils are friendly and polite. They follow teachers' instruction and are keen to do their best at school. Low-level disruption during learning is very rare.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils in key stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use accurate assessment information to plan learning that meets pupils' needs in key stage 2
 - teaching challenges pupils, particularly the most able, to make good progress from their different starting points, especially in mathematics at key stage 2
 - teachers plan activities that allow pupils to build on and deepen their prior learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors stringently hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes
 - the curriculum includes enough time and opportunity for pupils to develop specific skills in subjects such as geography and history.

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

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been able to make clear improvements to many different aspects of the school's work. The effectiveness of the early years provision has been transformed and significant improvements to teaching in key stage 1 have resulted in pupils making much better progress in these year groups. Leaders have also overseen tangible improvements in pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development. As a result, pupils now benefit from a much better education than at the time of the last inspection.
- Despite this, the school continues to require improvement. This is because the improvements to teaching and pupils' outcomes across key stage 2 have been less consistent than those seen elsewhere.
- Pupils' outcomes in 2017 demonstrated that the Year 6 cohort had made much better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than previous Year 6 cohorts, and that their progress was broadly in line with that of all pupils nationally. However, the provisional outcomes for Year 6 pupils in 2018 indicate that these improvements have not been sustained. These pupils had made significantly less progress through key stage 2 than their Year 6 peers from the previous year.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection confirmed that the improvements that have been made to teaching throughout the school are less secure in key stage 2. As a result, some teaching in key stage 2 is not doing enough to compensate for historic weaknesses in teaching lower down the school.
- Leaders ensure that teachers check on pupils' progress to identify those pupils who fall behind. Pupils receive carefully tailored help from staff and, where appropriate, other agencies. However, teachers, especially in key stage 2, are not as skilled in using accurate assessment information to plan learning that challenges pupils.
- The leader for special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is proactive in securing appropriate support for pupils. She also ensures that parents of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive regular information about the progress their children are making. Leaders use additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. As a result, these pupils make similar rates of progress to their peers at the school and their attainment is getting closer to national averages for all pupils.
- The headteacher has a strong sense of moral purpose. She is keen to ensure the best possible use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. To this end, following the last inspection, she arranged for an independent review of this aspect. Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. As a result, rates of attendance and outcomes for this group of pupils have improved. This is particularly the case at key stage 1, where school data indicates that disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly strong progress.
- Senior leaders have a strong rationale for the design of the curriculum. The curriculum ensures that all pupils, regardless of their home circumstances, benefit from a broad variety of experiences. Pupils' learning across a range of subjects is enriched with lots

of visits, residential trips and external speakers. Pupils speak enthusiastically about residential visits to Conway and Tattenhall. Nonetheless, work in pupils' books shows that in some subject areas, teachers focus on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is sometimes at the expense of opportunities for pupils to apply their subject-specific skills and deepen their learning in history and geography.

- There is an array of extra-curricular activities for pupils to choose from including after-school clubs for pupils who enjoy football, gymnastics or performing arts. Leaders have established links with a school in Uganda to help pupils to gain an appreciation of life beyond their school community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and highly motivated. They are keen to move the school forward. Learning mentors provide pupils and their families with a range of social and emotional support. This helps to ensure that pupils are 'emotionally ready to learn'. Subject leaders are equally committed. Since the last inspection, they have worked to improve the quality of teaching. This is particularly evident at key stage 1, where pupils make good progress across a broad range of subjects. That said, subject leaders have been less successful in improving the quality of teaching at key stage 2.
- Staff morale is high. They benefit from opportunities to develop their teaching. For example, help from the local authority has had a particularly positive effect on the quality of pupils' writing across the school. Those teachers who are new to the profession feel well supported by more experienced staff. During the inspection, newly qualified teachers were highly positive about the wide range of training opportunities and support from which they benefit.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example to ensure that pupils benefit from an overarching ethos of kindness and compassion. The school is a haven of inclusivity where pupils and staff can be honest and open about their identity.
- Leaders have created a community where differences are celebrated. Pupils have a clear understanding of protected characteristics and the importance of mutual respect. This is because staff benefit from a multitude of training opportunities in this area and all adults at the school promote diversity. Pupils learn about different religions, faiths, cultures and types of family different to their own. As a result, when pupils leave the school, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders continue to build positive relationships with parents and carers. Leaders ensure that parents have regular opportunities to speak with staff. This is particularly important given the significant proportion of pupils who arrive part way through the academic year. Staff get to know these pupils and their families quickly. There are also more opportunities for parents to learn about how to help their children. As a result, parents are positive about the school and are confident that their children are well cared for. Leaders' work with parents has had a particularly positive effect on improving pupils' rates of attendance.

Governance of the school

- Governors are active members of the school community. They share the headteachers' commitment to providing a safe and highly inclusive place for pupils to learn.
- Governors have worked closely with leaders and have overseen the clear improvements

that have taken place since the previous inspection. Where governors regularly review the impact of leaders' actions over time, there have been sustained improvements. For example, leaders' actions have ensured that rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils have greatly reduced.

- The governing body receives regular and accurate information from the headteacher about the school's performance. However, governors do not consistently use this information to hold leaders stringently to account for the impact of their actions on pupils' learning over time. In particular, the improvements in Year 6 outcomes in 2017 caused governors to be less rigorous in the challenge that they provided to leaders about the progress being made by pupils in key stage 2 during the previous academic year. Moreover, their work has been less effective in securing consistent improvement to the quality of teaching in key stage 2.
- An external review of governance has therefore been recommended to ensure that governors leave nothing to chance in their quest to provide a consistently good standard of education to the pupils in their care.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Keeping pupils safe from harm is at the centre of leaders' actions. Leaders foster highly effective links with other agencies. This allows pupils and their families access to appropriate help and support.
- Leaders have created a vigilant community. Systems are in place to ensure that adults who work at the school are safe to work with children. Staff receive relevant safeguarding training. They understand the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Staff are alert to different safeguarding issues and the different types of abuse. Staff act swiftly on any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare.
- Safeguarding is woven through the curriculum. As a result, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school and at home. For example, pupils understand how to stay safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders have been effective in bringing about clear improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This is particularly evident at key stage 1, where improved teaching has led to significantly better outcomes for pupils. Teaching has also improved in some areas of key stage 2 and this is helping some pupils to make stronger progress. Despite this, the improvements that have been made to teaching have not been uniform throughout the school. As a result, inconsistency remains in the quality of teaching in key stage 2 and in mathematics.
- Teachers know their pupils well. However, work in pupils' books shows there are occasions when teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to plan activities which challenge pupils. This means that pupils are unable to build consistently upon their knowledge and skills, particularly in key stage 2.
- Although teachers ensure that pupils are able to develop their basic skills in mathematics, the teaching of mathematics requires improvement. Teachers provide

pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Nonetheless, on occasion, teachers do not use accurate assessment information to ensure that problems are challenging enough. As a result, learning for some pupils, particularly the most able, lacks challenge.

- Teachers ensure that pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the wider curriculum. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their subject-specific skills. This is particularly the case in subjects such as history and geography.
- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school and those improvements seen at the last inspection have been sustained. Phonics in key stage 1 is taught well. Pupils benefit from regular, well-planned sessions. As a result, pupils make good progress in this aspect of their learning. They also apply their phonics knowledge well in their reading.
- All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour during learning times. Well-established classroom routines mean that pupils move seamlessly from one task to another. Calm and well-organised classrooms support pupils' learning well. Highly positive and harmonious learning environments are the norm.
- Teachers have fostered highly supportive and effective relationships with pupils. Pupils are confident that their teachers will help them with their work if they get stuck or fall behind when learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school is a serene, happy and inclusive environment. Pupils are happy in school. They feel safe and are well cared for by staff and they trust their teachers to help them if they have worries or concerns.
- Pupils benefit from highly effective pastoral support. Staff work extremely effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate help.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. However, if an incident does arise, pupils trust their teachers to take their concerns seriously, step in and deal with it effectively. As a result, pupils feel safe and well supported.
- Pupils understand the importance of mutual respect and individual differences are celebrated. For example, pupils know it is wrong to discriminate against those who have different religious beliefs or those who are in same-sex relationships.
- Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe, both at school and at home. For example, pupils know that they should not share their personal information, such as the name of their school and their address, online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. They show the highest levels of respect for their fellow pupils, staff and visitors.
- Pupils report that learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils' behaviour during learning supports their progress. Pupils listen eagerly and follow teachers' instructions. Pupils are keen to do their best and take pride in their work.
- School information shows that the proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period reduced considerably in the last academic year. This is because staff provide effective help and support for those pupils who struggle to regulate their own behaviour. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from support with their social and emotional well-being.
- Pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in their good rates of attendance. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders' improved communication with parents ensures that pupils and their families understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- For the small number of pupils who struggle with their attendance, there is appropriate support available. On the surface, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school looks high. This figure does not provide the whole picture. This is because there is a significant proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through the school year. Leaders only remove pupils from attendance registers when they know that pupils are safe, such as when they start to attend a new school. This ensures that children do not go missing in education.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders have secured improvements in pupils' outcomes at key stage 1. These improvements have been ongoing and sustained. Furthermore, the outcomes for pupils in Year 6 in 2017 demonstrated that they had made significantly greater progress than their predecessors from previous years. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with that of all pupils nationally.
- The positive trajectory of improvement at the end of Year 6 was not sustained in 2018. Progress across key stage 2 was weak and too few pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The impact of a large number of pupils joining the school part way through key stage 2, coupled with historic weaknesses in teaching, go some way to explaining why pupils' attainment and progress declined. Nonetheless, inspection evidence confirms that the emphatic improvements in teaching in most areas of the school are not as secure in key stage 2. As a result, older pupils continue to have gaps in their learning which prevent them from making the best possible start in the next stage of their education.
- Leaders' assessment information and the work in pupils' books show improvement in current pupils' rates of progress. This is particularly evident in pupils' writing. For example, pupils in Year 3 use adventurous vocabulary to make their writing more interesting. However, work in pupils' books shows that the progress that pupils make over time varies in reading, writing and mathematics during key stage 2.
- Less-able pupils in Year 1 fare particularly well in mathematics. Over time, pupils

develop their knowledge of number and basic calculations well. Work in pupils' books shows that by the time they reach the end of key stage 1, pupils are well prepared to start Year 3. Nonetheless, some pupils lose ground during key stage 2 because there are times when teachers do not plan activities that build sufficiently upon pupils' prior learning. This is particularly evident in mathematics.

- Pupils, particularly the less able, make good progress in reading at key stage 1. Pupils at key stage 1 have lots of opportunities to use their phonics knowledge and develop their comprehension skills. This demonstrates the effectiveness of leaders' work to improve the teaching of phonics across the school. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 has risen steadily since the last inspection.
- Unvalidated results show that disadvantaged pupils performed well at the end of key stage 1 in 2018. At key stage 2, leaders' assessment information shows that the differences between disadvantaged pupils' achievement and that of other pupils nationally are narrowing.
- Those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case at key stage 1. This is because they benefit from carefully tailored support and there are well-established links between staff and parents of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils enjoy the variety of a broad range of subjects in the wider curriculum. However, teachers focus heavily on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects to compensate for historic weaknesses in the development of these areas. This comes at the expense of opportunities for pupils to apply subject-specific skills and to deepen their learning in subjects such as history and geography.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years are safe and secure. This is because staff adhere to welfare requirements and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The early years leader has established strong links with parents to ensure that children settle well when they arrive at the school. This is particularly important given that a small but significant proportion of children arrive in Reception part way through the school year.
- Almost three quarters of the children who arrive in Reception have levels of skill and knowledge that are lower than those typical for their age. Many children have difficulties with their personal and social skills while others struggle considerably with their language and communication. The early years leader ensures that pupils in Reception benefit from appropriate help to overcome these barriers to learning.
- Improved links with a local nursery, as well as home visits by staff, ensure that staff know children well when they arrive at the school. Following work with the local authority, there have been improvements in the accuracy of assessment in the early years. This means that children's barriers to learning in the early years are identified more quickly and children benefit swiftly from carefully tailored support.
- Strong leadership of the early years, alongside consistently effective teaching, means that improvements in the early years have been ongoing and sustained. The proportion

of children who achieve a good level of development has improved and is close to the national average.

- Teaching is good. Children benefit from a bright, stimulating and well-organised environment. Relationships between staff and children are ones of trust. These good relationships, alongside well-established routines and high expectations, mean that children in the early years behave well.
- Well-planned activities in the classroom capture children’s interest. Staff use questioning techniques skilfully. They reshape their explanations to enhance and improve children’s understanding of key concepts. The outdoor area is equally purposeful, with ample opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. Children are happy and curious learners.
- Disadvantaged children and those children who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. They are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1. This is because teachers plan learning that meets their needs well. Leaders use additional funding effectively to ensure that those pupils who need extra help receive their entitlement and achieve well.
- The leader of the early years ensures that any additional support has a positive effect on children’s progress and development. She regularly reviews whether strategies are effective and makes changes if necessary. As a result, children in the early years are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	111086
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10052936

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	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philippa Watton
Headteacher	Sue Finch
Telephone number	01513 382 224
Website	www.westminsterprimary.cheshire.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@westminsterprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2016

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 is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the start of an academic year is above the national average and rising, as is the proportion of pupils who leave the school at times other than the end of an academic year.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2018. Since the last inspection, there have been some changes to staffing including the appointment of two new teachers.

- Since the last inspection, the school has received support from the local authority and a local national teaching school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning throughout the school. The inspector scrutinised pupils' work across year groups and listened to some Year 1 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and seven other governors, the headteacher and other 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, safeguarding documentation and leaders' self-evaluation. She considered the headteacher's reports to the governing body, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- The inspector considered the views of three parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted.
- The inspector checked on the contents of the school website. She also took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and nine responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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