

Stockton Heath Primary School

West Avenue, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 6HX

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, their progress is not consistently good in all year groups.
- Pupils' standards of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 are not high enough.
- While teaching has improved and there are more examples of good and outstanding lessons, it is not yet effective enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- The impact of subject leaders in supporting school improvement is still at a relatively early stage of development.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive improvement exceptionally well. Their excellent leadership and management skills have been instrumental in improving teaching and learning and establishing a strong senior leadership team.
- Relative to the time that other senior leaders have held their positions, they have also contributed very well to school improvement.
- The school's senior leaders are excellent role models for teaching.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from consistently high-quality teaching and learning experiences. As a result, they achieve well in all aspects of their work.
- Pupils feel safe and happy in school. Their conduct is exemplary and, when lessons are interesting and they are given work that meets their needs, they apply themselves well.
- Governors have high expectations for the school's improvement. They ask the right questions to ensure that they are well informed about how effective the teaching is and how well pupils are learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, four of which were conducted jointly with the school’s senior leaders.
- Inspectors analysed pupils’ work and the school’s data about their attainment and progress. They listened to some pupils read, held two formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and at break times and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and with three governors.
- A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and analysed a range of school documentation. This included: safeguarding records and those relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance; records of the school’s checks on the quality of teaching and pupils’ learning; improvement plans; and records of governors’ meetings.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View) so inspectors took account of a recent parental survey conducted by the school.

Inspection team

Margot D’Arcy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Lawrence

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- When the school was inspected in June 2011 it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, it was inspected on four occasions.
- The school is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or whose parents are in the armed forces, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the school's last full inspection a considerable number of new staff have been appointed, including a new headteacher.
- The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy School status and Activemark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise pupils' attainment and enable all to make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school should do this by ensuring that:
 - lessons and the work pupils are given challenge and motivate them all and build well on what they already know
 - teachers make maximum use of lesson time to enable pupils to learn quickly
 - teachers maintain an overview of how well all pupils are learning during lessons, intervening where necessary to check on the impact of support staff in promoting pupils' learning.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - building on work already underway to develop roles and the impact of subject leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. The wide range of stimulating learning experiences that are provided ensures that children are happy and eager to learn. The children make consistently good and sometimes outstanding progress in all areas so that by the time they begin Year 1 their attainment is above average.
- The 2012 statutory assessments showed that Year 2 pupils reached average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Year 1 pupils' understanding of phonics (the sounds letters make) was also assessed as similar to pupils of the same age nationally. Given their earlier attainment, these standards are not high enough.
- Pupils' current attainment and progress during Key Stage 1 are improving. More pupils are learning well and on track to reach higher standards. However, their achievement is not yet good. This is partly because some pupils are still catching up from earlier underachievement, but it is also because reading, writing and mathematics are not yet taught consistently well.
- Recent improvements to the provision for pupils in Year 1 have resulted in better opportunities for them to learn through meaningful activities that enhance their understanding and enjoyment. This was particularly evident in mathematics lessons where pupils undertook 'challenges', such as using small construction materials to build garages for different-sized toy cars.
- The 2012 Year 6 test results showed that pupils' standards in writing and mathematics were higher than the previous year and higher than those attained by pupils across the country. These results reflected that most pupils had made the expected progress from their earlier attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, and over a third did better than this. They illustrated the school's success in addressing the previous inspection's recommendations for improvement in these two areas and the strengths in the teaching in the upper part of Key Stage 2. However, they masked the unevenness of progress within the key stage, which is still a feature.
- The 2012 Year 6 reading test results were not as positive. Pupils' attainment was lower than the previous year and lower than for pupils of the same age across the country. Boys, in particular, did not achieve well in this aspect. Currently, more pupils than previously are on track to make and exceed the expected progress in reading but there are still too many pupils, mainly at Key Stage 2, who are not making fast enough progress.
- The school's data show that the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is as variable as that of other pupils. Some are progressing very well, but others are not achieving as well as they might.
- The school has been successful in reducing the gap between the attainment of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and that of other pupils. In the 2011 end of Key Stage 2 tests pupils in receipt of the pupil premium were almost three years behind other pupils in reading, two years behind in mathematics and 16 months behind in writing. In the 2012 tests pupils in this group attained slightly better than other pupils in reading and were six months in front in mathematics; the gap in writing had been reduced to six months.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is still too uneven to ensure that pupils who need to make rapid progress to eradicate earlier underachievement can do so and others can make consistently good progress to attain higher standards.
- While teaching is not yet good, improvements have continued to be made. Strengths in the teaching of older pupils have been sustained, including exceptionally well taught booster lessons in literacy and mathematics for the more able pupils and those who find learning more difficult. This unfailingly high quality of teaching is promoting pupils' rapid progress and helping to raise standards.

- Although there are more examples of good and better teaching in other year groups at Key Stage 2, consistently good teaching at this key stage is not fully embedded. This is also the case at Key Stage 1, despite increasingly more examples of good teaching. Previously outstanding teaching at Key Stage 1 has been maintained.
- In the most effective lessons teachers provide work that captures pupils' interest and expect pupils to work hard and quickly, for example to solve problems independently and as part of a group. Teachers provide just the right balance of challenge and support, adapting their questions and the work throughout the lesson to get the best out of pupils, keeping an overview of how well all pupils are doing and checking the impact of support staff so that learning never slows.
- This was evident in a Year 6 lesson on Ancient Greece, in which pupils' learning across a range of subjects was promoted exceptionally well. The teacher reminded the pupils, who were making model temples, about the mathematical ratio of the 'Golden Rectangle' and pupils applied this when constructing the columns to support the roof; pupils were amazed as they tested the strength of the roof to withstand increasing weights.
- Where teaching is less effective at both key stages, teachers do not match work well enough to pupils' needs or use the best methods to help them learn well, including when teaching basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. In the main, this now tends to hinder the learning of particular groups, such as the more able pupils or average attainers, rather than the whole class, as previously.
- At other times teachers do not make the most effective use of the lesson time. Sometimes they talk for too long or spend too much time explaining tasks, leaving too little time for productive learning. To varying degrees, this was seen in a range of subjects and was also a feature of some of the reading lessons that occur at the start of each day.
- The teaching of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs now mostly occurs within lessons rather than taking small groups out of the classroom. This enables class teachers to more easily check on and support these pupils' learning, even when their work is being led by a support assistant. In some lessons this is working well and having a positive impact on promoting these pupils' progress, but practice remains uneven.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective in promoting children's progress and enjoyment of learning. Early reading, writing and number skills are taught very well, both in teacher-led activities and through play. For example, the children made effective use of writing materials in the class 'vets' and staff reinforced children's understanding of letter sounds as they made Easter cards. Carefully chosen books captured boys' interest and resulted in animated and extended discussions between groups. Outdoors, staff exploited the mathematical potential of a game of hoopla to develop the children's understanding of number and addition.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' strongly developed moral understanding is evident in the exemplary way that they conduct themselves in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. They are courteous and show respect for the adults who work with them. They work and play together well and there are few instances of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most are keen to learn and respond enthusiastically when the work they are given motivates and challenges them. Conversely, where the work they are given is too easy, too difficult or not particularly stimulating, they lose interest and learning slows.
- Pupils are very clear about the improvements that have occurred since the school was last inspected. They provided good examples to support their views that lessons are now more interesting and breaktimes are now better organised to provide more opportunities for playing games or just to enjoy quieter places to chat to their friends.
- The pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They know about different types of bullying and the dangers of using the internet. They trust the school staff to keep them safe and

to deal fairly with any instances of inappropriate behaviour that might occur.

- Pupils are keen to earn the weekly awards for friendship, respect and excellence and wear their medals proudly. They are excited by the new 'pen licence' award and are clear about what they have to do to receive this.
- Pupils are sensible and take responsibilities, such as school councillors and play leaders, seriously. They are clear about how these roles enable them to help improve things in the school and contribute to making playtimes more fun.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Most pupils are punctual and attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- Although the headteacher was only appointed in September 2012, he has made an excellent impact on school improvement. The deputy headteacher also has significant strengths as a leader and manager. She has shown remarkable adaptability in working with the two seconded headteachers who led the school for short periods before the headteacher's appointment. Both of the seconded headteachers contributed well to the school's journey of improvement.
- The very strong team of headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing an excellent lead in driving forward improvements. In particular, previous significant weaknesses in teaching and the leadership structure have been eliminated.
- The leadership team has been restructured and the roles of new senior leaders have been developed well. They now make a very good contribution to school improvement and play a full part in checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. This has strengthened the school's position to improve more quickly in the future.
- Considerable planning and effort have been invested in developing the roles of subject leaders. This began from scratch because historically no subject leadership structure was in place. While these leaders have received training and are clear about their roles, not all have had the opportunity to make an impact because senior leaders have rightly prioritised securing good classroom practice first. Nevertheless, there is a clear plan for the development of these leaders and to date this has been implemented to very good effect for one subject.
- Senior leaders' detailed analyses of the assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are used well to decide where to target support to improve teaching and learning. Currently this information is also driving the priority of ensuring more accurate identification of pupils with special educational needs and greater consistency of progress for pupils within this group.
- The new creative curriculum is developing effectively and providing some good opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good opportunities for art, music and learning modern foreign languages, along with a range of after-school clubs, educational visits and information technology-based homework activities, enrich the curriculum.
- The school keeps pupils safe and leaders are working tirelessly to ensure that all pupils have the same good opportunities to succeed. Leaders keep parents well informed. They welcome and act upon parents' views. Parents continue to support the school very well. They are appreciative of the hard work that has occurred to bring about improvements.
- The local authority has provided very good support for the school. Weekly visits have been used effectively to validate leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning and to provide support in a variety of areas, including the development of new leadership roles.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors question school leaders in detail about the school's performance and as a result are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They ensure that the performance management process is used appropriately to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110996
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	409636

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Brougham
Headteacher	Dan Harding
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2011
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