

Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School

Clough Avenue, Longford, Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 9PH

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Standards in writing are low across the school. The majority of pupils make expected progress from well below average starting points, but not enough pupils make progress that is better than this, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Attainment in reading is not improving sufficiently rapidly in Key Stage 2. Pupils' ability to understand and draw conclusions from what they read is not yet good.
- Pupils' progress is not consistently good in all classes and subjects. This is because teaching is inconsistent in quality and some requires improvement.
- Learning in lessons does not always move on quickly enough. Pupils do not always know exactly what is expected of them.
- Pupils are not always given work that is at exactly the right level of challenge for them, including those who are most-able.
- Teachers' marking, especially in writing, does not always show pupils exactly how to improve their work. Sometimes pupils do not have sufficient time to act on the advice given.
- The new headteacher and other senior leaders have not yet had time to have sustained impact on teaching and pupils' progress in reading and writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 are improving.
- Progress in mathematics has significantly improved. Data for 2013 show that standards were broadly average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils in the designated provision achieve well because teaching is carefully matched to their individual needs.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well.
- The school cares exceptionally well for all pupils so that they feel very safe and secure.
- The new headteacher has a clear plan for the future of the school. She has quickly identified what the school needs to do to improve.
- Governors provide good challenge for leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance.
- Senior leaders and governors are taking positive steps to improve teaching, so that pupils' progress is improving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. They listened to pupils reading and observed the teaching of reading throughout the school. They observed teaching in small support groups and in the designated provision classes.
- Discussions took place with pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and four other governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of the school’s analysis of the most recent parental surveys carried out by the school and 23 staff questionnaires. There were no published responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils’ progress across the school, the school’s view of its own effectiveness and its development planning, records of the quality of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documentation in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Melvyn Hemmings

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school houses a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs (the designated provision), currently providing education for 17 pupils with a statement of special educational needs for cognition and learning difficulties, serving all areas of Warrington.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all consistently good or outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - activities in lessons are always at exactly the right level to challenge all pupils, and enable the most able pupils to extend their skills
 - pupils are actively involved in learning at all stages of lessons so that their learning moves forward more quickly
 - teachers always make it clear to pupils of different abilities exactly what is expected of them in lessons.
- Accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2, in order to raise standards in reading and writing, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in understanding and interpreting what they read
 - making sure that, when teachers mark pupils' writing, they consistently give clear guidance and precise targets which show pupils exactly how to improve their work, and that pupils are always given time to act on this advice through editing their work and extending their skills.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management, so that all teaching is good or outstanding, by embedding the improved systems to check the quality of teaching so that the well-targeted support and guidance teachers receive is sustained over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress varies between year groups and subjects. Pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Most pupils make expected progress from their individual starting points but too few of them make better progress than this, especially in reading, by the time they leave Year 6.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 remains low. Pupils' progress in reading is not accelerating fast enough over a sustained period. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop the skills they need to understand and draw conclusions from what they read.
- Standards in writing, although showing some improvement, remain low at both Key Stages 1 and 2. When teachers mark pupils' writing, they do not always give them clear guidance or set pupils precise enough targets to make sure that they know exactly how to make their work better. Teachers do not consistently give pupils the chance to respond to marking by editing their work and extending their skills.
- There has been a significant improvement in pupils' achievement in mathematics over the past three years. In most classes, pupils now make good progress. Most pupils reach the levels expected for their age and an increasing number are attaining levels higher than this.
- Children start school in the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that they are eager to learn and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Early reading skills are taught well. Children enjoy the games and activities which help them learn to read and, this year, a greater proportion of pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard in reading words in national phonics check. Results in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are improving.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make better progress from their individual starting points than other pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were less than a term behind other pupils in reading and writing, and attained standards in mathematics similar to other pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. This is because the school uses pupil premium funding well to provide a range of additional support. It clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil has an equality of opportunity to achieve.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. This is because of the skilful way that teaching assistants support them in class, and the variety of special programmes which are put in place to meet their needs and accelerate their learning.
- Pupils within the designated provision make good progress in relation to their differing abilities and range of complex needs, because of the intensive support that they receive and teaching that is matched to their individual needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement overall, because, despite some good teaching being observed, it has not been consistently good enough over time to ensure that pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects. The quality of work in pupils' books reflects this mixed picture.
- Pupils' learning in lessons does not always move forward quickly enough. Teachers' introductions are sometimes too long to keep all pupils interested, or pupils are expected to concentrate on independent activities for too long.
- Although some teaching is planned very precisely to meet the needs of different pupils, teachers do not consistently plan activities which are at exactly the right level, nor do they always make it clear to pupils of different abilities exactly what they are expected to achieve. Most-able pupils are not always given work that challenges them sufficiently to extend their skills.

- Where teaching is most effective, teachers question pupils skilfully, both to check their understanding and to extend their ideas. Pupils in Year 5 were given good opportunities to discuss and explain the effectiveness of a range of different strategies to solve problems in mathematics.
- Throughout the school, there are strong and positive relationships in lessons. Teachers praise and encourage pupils and celebrate their achievements. During lessons, teachers use 'working walls' well to remind pupils of what they have already learned and what they need to do next.
- Teaching assistants play an active role in supporting pupils' learning. In Year 1, they were fully involved in lively discussion with groups of pupils as they challenged them to think of ways to describe different settings.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities, both indoors and outdoors. They have many opportunities to explore and learn independently. Adults encourage them to talk as they play and well-focused teaching in groups helps them to achieve well.
- Resources are mostly planned carefully to help pupils to learn. This includes the effective use of modern technologies to help pupils record their learning and to enable pupils to work independently to consolidate previous learning.
- Individual and small group teaching for pupils who find learning difficult is precisely matched to their needs. Good teaching in the nurture group links well to their learning in class. Teaching in the designated provision is good because it focuses on small steps which help pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There is a calm, happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Pupils are sensible and considerate as they move around the building. They cooperate well with each other, both in lessons and when playing together.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and their generally good behaviour in lessons make a strong contribution to their learning. Adults manage behaviour well by being consistently firm and positive. Pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun. They take pride in the presentation of their work. However, when the pace of lessons is slow, or when activities are not at exactly the right level, pupils lose interest and some pupils do not behave so well.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They trust adults to look after them well and to help when they are upset. Staff go to great lengths to make sure that pupils with additional learning, health, social, emotional or behavioural needs are included well in school life and are supported extremely well. Parents appreciate this and feel that their children are safe and well cared for in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They feel incidents are rare, and any issues that do arise are dealt with speedily and effectively. Pupils also know how to stay safe in other situations, such as when using the internet.
- The school places considerable emphasis on regular attendance. Most pupils now attend regularly and there has been a significant decline in the number of pupils away for any significant length of time. The welfare coordinator works tirelessly to assist families where pupils are at risk of poor attendance and provides a wide range of support actions where this is the case.
- The breakfast club provides a calm and relaxing start to the day.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, although pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are improving, there is still more to do to ensure they are consistently good or better in all classes and subjects. Actions taken have not yet had time to have a

sustained impact on the school's performance. The guidance and support that leaders provide to help teachers improve what they do have not led to sufficiently rapid improvements to the overall quality of teaching.

- The new headteacher has successfully shared her plan for the future and determination to provide pupils with the best possible opportunities with other senior leaders. Although senior leaders are a little over generous in their current evaluation of the school's performance, they have accurately identified what still needs to be done to improve. Middle leaders are fully involved in this and all staff are supportive of school leaders in their drive for further improvement.
- Senior leaders have improved the systems for checking how well individual pupils are doing. The school provides a wide range of special support programmes for pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning and leaders check carefully how effective these are. This is helping to drive improvements in pupils' progress. Leadership of special educational needs and the designated provision is good.
- The curriculum has been re-organised. It clearly focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. It provides a range of exciting experiences to motivate pupils, particularly in their writing. It contributes well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has only just received the new Primary School Sport funding. Plans are in place to increase the range of sporting activities available and to provide training for staff so that it will have a sustained impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- Most parents are very supportive of the school and feel their children make good progress. They know that they will always be welcomed in school and can talk to someone if they have any concerns.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support and challenge, which have helped to drive improvements in achievement and teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are extremely supportive of the new headteacher. They bring a wide range of expertise to the school. They know how well pupils are doing and about the quality of teaching because they have a good understanding of the school's performance data and take part in monitoring activities, such as looking at pupils' books. The governors are well-informed about the outcomes of teachers' performance management and how these are linked to pay progression. They know what still needs to be done to improve the school further. They provide the necessary support and challenge to enable senior leaders to take decisive action to improve teaching and achievement. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and that it is having a positive impact on the outcomes for eligible pupils. They are fully committed to equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination of any kind and in continuing to ensure that the school remains fully inclusive.

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	110973
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	424597

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Buckley
Headteacher	Paula Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2010
Telephone number	01925 632705
Fax number	01925 630922
Email address	meadowside_primary@warrington.gov.uk

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