

Wigan Worsley Mesnes Community Primary School

Clifton Street, Worsley Mesnes, Wigan, Lancashire, WN3 5HN

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From generally low starting points, when they first join the school, pupils make good progress in all classes and, by the end of Year 6, reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium achieve equally as well as their peers in school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers are well informed about the progress that pupils are making and use this information to plan lessons that build on their earlier learning.
- Pupils are extremely courteous and helpful to others. They feel valued and safe at school.
- Imaginative activities and a wide range of subjects and after-school events help to broaden pupils' horizons, promote an interest in others and give them opportunities to apply their basic skills in different subjects.
- The high priority given to nurturing pupils so that they develop a strong sense of self worth and social responsibility is a significant feature of the school's work and helps pupils to do their best.
- The headteacher's calm and well-organised commitment to ongoing school improvement shines out as a key strength.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They have maintained, and improved upon, the school's good performance and their plans for future improvement are well informed and ambitious.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching overall is not outstanding.
- Although boys make good progress, they do not do as well as girls, particularly in writing.
- A few pupils miss too much school, or arrive late, without good reason.
- Teaching assistants and support staff do not always get the feedback they need in order to improve the quality of their work and the impact they have on helping pupils to learn.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher, and made short visits to other lessons. Inspectors also visited an assembly and the breakfast club, observed break times and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school leaders, teaching and support staff, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and three governors. A telephone conversation with a local authority representative also took place.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also talked to parents who visited the school, looked at minutes of the parent forum meetings, and considered 23 responses to the school staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans, and records of governing body meetings. The work in pupils' books and records relating to the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wigan Worsley Mesnes Community Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, for children who are looked after by the local authority, and pupils whose parents are serving in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a before-school breakfast club from 8.15 a.m.
- Earlier this year, the senior leadership structure at the school was changed; the post of deputy headteacher was replaced by the creation of two assistant headteacher posts.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching in order to raise standards even higher, especially in boys' writing, by:
 - making sure that, in all classes, the guidance given to pupils, and particularly boys, helps them to edit and refine their writing so that they develop the skills needed to improve their written work
 - checking carefully that the actions taken to inspire boys to write are working
 - checking that the actions taken to support one group of pupils during a lesson do not leave other pupils to make slower progress than they are capable of achieving.
- Reduce the number of pupils who arrive late, or miss too much school, by:
 - working closely with parents to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality
 - challenging families who take their children out of school at unnecessary times during the term.
- Strengthen the systems that leaders use to check the impact of teaching on pupils' learning by making sure that all support staff, especially those working with disabled pupils or pupils with special educational needs, get the feedback they need in order to recognise and learn from effective practice, and develop their skills further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below, and sometimes well below, those typical for their age. The school's well-thought-out procedures help children to understand expectations and routines, so most settle quickly and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children make particularly good progress in their early communication and social skills. Nevertheless, by the time they reach the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the majority of children are still operating at below age-related expectations in many areas of learning.
- Over time, the standards that pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have been below average. However, progress in Key Stage 1 has got faster year-on-year and, in 2013, pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This clear trend of improvement at Key Stage 1 is the result of teaching that has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- Pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and, by the end of Year 6, they reach standards in English and mathematics that are at least in line with the national average. The school is quick to identify the most able pupils and makes sure that these pupils are pushed to reach the highest standards that they can achieve.
- In both Key Stages 1 and 2, the progress that pupils make in mathematics and reading is stronger than the progress that they make in writing. This is because, while boys and girls achieve equally well in reading and mathematics, a proportion of boys do not do as well as girls with their writing. The school is aware of this, and it is indicative of the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity that it is already taking steps to boost boys' performance in writing, but there is still more to be done.
- The school is particularly successful at making sure that those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do not fall behind other pupils in English or mathematics. In 2012, and again in 2013, there was no difference between the academic performance of these pupils and other pupils in the school. Both groups reached average standards.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well. The school makes an extra effort to make sure pupils with complex needs, or who face difficulties in their lives or with their learning, are fully included in all that is on offer. These pupils do well because they get skilful support; sometimes assisted by advice from specialist visiting staff. Nevertheless, given the good quality support available to these pupils, school leaders could do not always check well enough whether the good progress that these pupils currently make, could be even faster.
- The school's approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters represent) and early reading is well organised. The system they use works well and, across the school, all groups of pupils make good progress in reading; they enjoy books and talk confidently about authors and the type of literature they enjoy.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in all classes is usually good and some, particularly at the top end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is outstanding at times.
- In the very best lessons, pupils are provided with exciting prompts that grab their attention and make them think hard and ask questions. In a Key Stage 2 lesson about democracy, an inspiring presentation by the Mayor of Wigan and council staff generated a high-quality discussion about decision making. Pupils listened carefully and spoke with confidence. They were able to talk about how their actions can make a positive difference, with the 'eco-spies' explaining how the work of the eco-committee had changed practice in the school. This was a superb example of how the school provides pupils with experiences that are relevant to their own lives and learning, prompt them to make decisions, and serve to broaden their thinking and horizons.

- A feature of many lessons is a sense of well-judged pace. Carefully chosen video clips, short sharp routines to practise spellings and letter sounds, and brisk careful questioning that help teachers find out what pupils already know and what they need to do next, all help teachers and pupils to make the most of the time available.
- However, occasionally this pace slips; sometimes this is because the needs of one group of learners, usually boys or pupils with particular learning needs, dominate the lesson and take too much of the teaching time away from other pupils. When this happens, all pupils get on with the tasks they have been set but learning is not as fast as it could be. At other times, some boys find it difficult to settle to written tasks, because they find it hard to maintain their interest or are not sure how to set their ideas down.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind in their work are given additional support to make sure they keep up with others. The midday 'lunch bunch' club gives pupils the chance to catch up with school work while adults are on hand to assist them. In an effort to boost boys' achievement in writing, a boys' writing club has just started; it is early days and the results of this, and other actions to boost boys' writing, are yet to be seen.
- The school's website also provides helpful links to steer pupils towards extra learning opportunities they can access from home.
- Work in pupils' books is marked regularly and pupils are able to explain how teachers' marking and feedback helps them to check and edit their work. It is clear that the different marking systems and routines that operate in all classes are helping pupils to make good progress. However, the guidance given to some pupils, usually boys, sometimes leaves them unclear about what they need to do to improve their written work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous and well mannered. They are proud of their school and this is evident in their smart appearance, polite behaviour and the welcome they give to visitors. They enjoy school and feel very safe when they are there.
- Staff have high expectations and are excellent role models. They are quick to praise good conduct and swift to challenge poor behaviour. The system for recording 'acts of kindness' is a simple effective routine that successfully highlights the importance of helpful acts.
- In most lessons pupils get on well and, when teaching is at its best, an enthusiasm for new learning shines out. On a few occasions, concentration drops when teaching or tasks do not offer enough guidance or interest for some pupils.
- Through weekly newsletters, displays and rewards in school, the importance of regular, punctual attendance at school is made clear. Over the past three years, attendance has improved and is now similar to the level of attendance seen in most other schools. However, a small number of pupils arrive late, or miss school, too often. For these pupils, such bad habits hinder their progress. In addition, and despite the clear messages that the school already give to parents about the need to reduce unnecessary absence, a few families still take their children out of school for extended periods of time for non-essential reasons. This reduces learning time for these pupils.
- Apart from an upward spike in 2011, when the school took decisive action to respond to a playground incident, the level of fixed-term exclusions gives no cause for concern. There have been no permanent exclusions for many years and this is testimony to the school's success with pupils who find it difficult to cope in school. During this inspection, inspectors came across several examples of how the school has nurtured vulnerable pupils and helped them to feel good about themselves and what they can achieve.
- There is some rough play outside and disagreements do occur from time-to-time, but pupils are adamant that there is no bullying at the school. All are confident that an adult will help them if they have a problem. Older pupils willingly show care for younger pupils.
- Through pupils-led committees, school teams, and the whole-school values that underpin much of the school's work, pupils are given a say in how things are done, grow in self confidence and

learn to be interested and respectful towards others.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has strengthened its good performance because of the calm and efficient leadership of the headteacher. Her knowledge of the pupils and their needs, both academic and pastoral; and her steady, focused vision means that the school is steered with well-informed confidence and direction. She is a highly effective leader.
- All senior leaders have a good knowledge about pupils' progress because they keep detailed records that are informed by the regular checks and meetings that take place to make sure all pupils on track. They use this information to judge the impact of teaching and to target support where it is most needed.
- While senior leaders frequently observe teachers at work and give them feedback about their teaching, the work of teaching assistants, particularly those who work with disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, is not checked in the same thorough way. This means that some of their very effective work goes unrecognised and they do not get enough guidance about how to improve further the quality of what they do to ensure the pupils they support make the best possible progress.
- The Primary School Sports funding is used to employ specialist teachers from the nearby secondary school. This quality of sport and physical education on offer is good and pupils are keen to participate. They benefit from this expert coaching which is improving their skills and awareness of how to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Work on display and in books shows that pupils receive a worthwhile education across a wide range of subjects, with many opportunities to apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The numerous after-school activities and trips that support cross-curricular learning provide all pupils with meaningful opportunities to learn outside the classroom, and also increase their awareness of the world and its cultural diversity.
- The well-supervised breakfast club gives pupils a good start to the day and ensures they are ready to learn as soon as school starts.
- The local authority has confidence in the school leadership and provides 'light touch' support from a distance.
- Safeguarding procedures comply with all current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong. Governors regularly visit the school and often observe teachers at work. In addition to the reports they receive, they make sure they ask the right questions in order to get, and understand, the information that they need. Consequently, they know about the quality of teaching and the progress of different groups of pupils. They are well aware that their use of pupil premium has been successful in making sure those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do not fall behind.
 - Records and inspection evidence show that governors have taken decisive action to ensure that the school staffing structure is organised so as to make best use of staff expertise and to provide pupils with the best possible deal. Reports about teachers' performance are considered against their annual targets and the Teachers' Standards before pay awards are decided.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is a member of the local safeguarding board and makes sure that the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are as robust as possible.

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	106404
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	426232

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mason
Headteacher	Janet Carroll
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2012
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