

# Mendell Primary School

Allport Lane, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside, CH62 7HN

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Standards across the school are uneven. Too few pupils, particularly the most able, reach the higher standards expected, given their starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Although most pupils make the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2, too few pupils make better progress than expected, particularly in writing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is variable. Leaders do not check the impact of their actions rigorously enough and gaps remain between the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils and others, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their literacy skills when they write in other subjects.
- Sometimes teachers do not provide enough time for pupils to make corrections or act on advice given in marking.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, are not always given work that is hard enough. At times, too little work is expected from pupils in lessons.
- Targets and milestones in strategic plans are too broad to enable leaders to check that the actions taken are the right ones and are bringing about improvements quickly enough.
- Middle leaders, some of whom are new to their roles, are not yet fully involved in checking the progress made by pupils and the quality of teaching in their areas.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have not always had a sufficiently comprehensive and accurate picture of performance in order to ask searching questions. As a result, pupils' achievement is not as strong as it was at the time of the last inspection.
- Although attendance has improved from the recently low levels, some pupils still do not attend school regularly.

### The school has the following strengths

- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of good provision.
- The school works hard to make sure that pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, are safe.
- The school has a strong sense of community. Pupils behave well, are keen to learn and show great care and respect for others.
- The curriculum captures pupils' interests well.
- Good teaching means that children in the early years make good progress from their different starting points.
- School leadership has recently made improvements in some aspects of teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons or parts of lessons across the school.
- Work in pupils' books was scrutinised. Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times, and visited the dining hall at lunchtime. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors also spoke to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met with three governors. They spoke to two representatives of the local authority and met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. They took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one phone call from a parent. Inspectors also took account of 27 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- A number of documents were examined, including information about pupils' progress and school improvement.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Emily Wheeldon

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll has risen since the previous inspection. The school is now similar in size to most other primary schools. Nursery children attend school in the mornings only. Most children transfer into Reception where they are joined by others, some of whom have attended Nursery elsewhere.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding continues to rise and is now well above average. (This additional funding is provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The number of pupils who join the school at other than the usual times is above average.
- The school has experienced some staffing changes since the previous inspection. Two middle leaders were promoted to posts in other schools in August 2014 and three new teachers joined the school in September 2014. The school has experienced a number of staff absences due to maternity leave.
- Recent building work has provided additional learning space and improved access to the school's entrance.
- The school has recently experienced several unavoidable changes to the governing body including the resignation of its Chair and vice-chair.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Before-and after-school clubs are provided on site by private providers. This provision is subject to separate inspections.
- Mendell holds the Eco School award and has been recognised as a UNICEF Rights Representing School.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good enough to raise achievement, particularly of the most able, and to close the gaps further for disadvantaged pupils by ensuring that:
  - the work is hard enough for all pupils, particularly the most able
  - marking takes place regularly, particularly when pupils write in subjects other than English, and clearly shows how pupils can make their work better
  - there is enough time in lessons for pupils to make corrections and act on advice given in marking so that they can improve their work
  - teachers move learning on quickly enough so that pupils, including the most able, achieve as much as possible in lessons.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - making sure that all leaders, including governors, have an accurate and secure understanding of the school's performance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, in order that school leaders can identify with precision the areas to work on and governors can hold them to account for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that middle leaders are involved fully in checking and developing the quality of teaching and improving pupils' progress in all year groups
  - providing sharp targets and short timescales in school plans to enable all leaders, including governors, to check quickly if the actions taken are having sufficient impact.
- Improve attendance further by continuing to raise the profile of this important aspect with pupils and their parents.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Although there is evidence of some recent improvement, particularly in the teaching of grammar and spelling, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough. As a result, progress in reading, writing and mathematics is uneven across the school and standards are not as high as they could be, particularly for the most able and for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2. Over time, too few pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in writing.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has established a strong sense of team-work among all who work in the school. All staff and governors share the headteacher's determination to continue to bring about improvements.
- All teachers now have key information about where pupils are in their learning and they are using this to track pupils' progress more closely. Staff are regularly held to account for the progress of the pupils in their care, and performance management is linked to closing the gaps for pupils. Whilst this is having a positive impact on individual pupils' progress leaders do not have a clear picture of how well all groups are doing and, as a result, they are unable to check if the actions they are taking are having quick enough impact on groups such as the most able and the disadvantaged. As a result, gaps remain between the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils and others, particularly in Key Stage 2 although further down the school such gaps are closing.
- The school's view of its performance is sometimes too generous. School plans generally identify the correct priorities but targets and milestones are too broad to enable leaders, including governors, to check that the actions taken are bringing about the improvements needed quickly enough.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and middle leaders are becoming more skilful at reviewing aspects of the school's work. However, some middle leaders are new to their role and the skills of all middle leaders are not developed well enough to enable them to contribute fully to the ongoing drive to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
- Leadership of special educational needs is effective. The school has taken prompt action in response to the recent national changes to special educational needs. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and tailored support is provided as a result. For example, the speech and language therapist provides weekly support for targeted pupils and meets regularly with their parents. This demonstrates the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The curriculum provides well-balanced, topic-based themes which capture pupils' interests well. In particular, information and communication technology (ICT) skills are woven through all topics and are promoting pupils' learning, including that in computing, well. The school is taking a proactive approach to developing assessment arrangements for the new curriculum. Leaders are trialling ways to check how well pupils are doing and are sharing case studies of the outcomes of the trials with other schools. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development needs are met well. A range of visits and visitors contribute well to the enrichment of the curriculum. For instance, during the inspection Year 6 left for the school's annual residential trip which is designed to enhance their personal skills.
- Good use is being made of the primary school sports funding to improve pupils' physical development and enjoyment of sport. The school takes very seriously the need to encourage pupils to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle. For example, the school council has been involved in helping fellow pupils make healthy choices about the contents of packed lunches.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors, and the results of Parent View, indicate that parents hold positive views of the school and appreciate the care that it provides for their children.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support for the school until recently. However, this is under review and targeted support has been identified.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The headteacher has taken prompt action to fill the vacancies on the governing body, including the posts of Chair and vice-chair. The new Chair of the Governing Body has led a review of the range of skills that governors bring to their role. As a result, a range of additional training and support is underway.
  - The governing body is highly committed to supporting the school. Governors know the schools' strengths and areas for development however, they do not get enough information about the progress of all groups to be able to hold the school fully to account for the achievement of its pupils.
  - Governors know that they have a role to play in improving the quality of teaching. They check that targets and pay awards for leaders and teachers are linked to pupils' achievement. However, the gaps

in the progress data that they receive prevent governors from having a fully accurate picture of the impact of the quality of teaching on the achievement of pupils.

- The governing body has a clear overview of the school's finances, including that associated with the recent building work. Governors ensure that the primary sports funding is spent appropriately and are clear about the impact of this funding on pupils' physical education and health and well-being.
- Governors also know how the pupil premium is being spent. Checks on the impact of the spending take place but these include little detailed information about the termly progress of disadvantaged pupils in each year group.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are polite and courteous at all times and are extremely proud of their school. Older pupils take good care of the younger ones, especially the pupils in Years 5 and 6 who act as playleaders. Pupils play well together and are kept safe and happy at playtimes.
- Pupils are extremely well motivated. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning make a good contribution to their learning in lessons. Where learning is strongest pupils engage well with adults, each other and their work and they make the progress of which they are capable. Even where the activities are too easy or teaching fails to stretch pupils' thinking, pupils are keen to learn and are respectful of adults and each other.
- Pupils are highly involved in the life of the school and make a good contribution to the decision-making processes. For example, pupils have helped to draw up charters and agreements as part of the school's role as a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of their role as global citizens and they are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Attendance has improved because of the decisive actions taken by leaders, however, a relatively small number of pupils still do not attend school regularly and attendance is still lower than average. Pupils would like to see the class awards for good attendance re-instated. The new website is still to be updated to reflect the school's focus on improving attendance.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Clear systems and procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' safety, including the safety of those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.
- Pupils are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe in school and at home. For example, they learn how to use the internet and mobile technology safely and during the inspection Year 5 spent a day brushing up their cycling proficiency through the government's 'Bikeability' programme.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and pupils and staff say that bullying is rare; if issues do occur pupils trust the adults to sort them out quickly. Pupils think that the adults apply the school rules fairly.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has not been good enough over time to enable all pupils, particularly the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2, to make consistently good progress. However, some aspects of teaching have improved recently, for example, the teaching of spelling and grammar and the teaching of problem-solving in mathematics
- Work set is not always hard enough, especially for the most able pupils, and at times too little work is expected from pupils in lessons because teachers do not move learning on quickly enough.
- Marking includes lots of praise to help motivate pupils. In mathematics and English books some teachers regularly offer advice about how work can be improved. However, this is not the case in all classes. Also, opportunities to develop pupils' basic literacy skills are often missed when they write in other subjects because 'theme' books are not marked regularly enough. Teachers do not always provide enough time for pupils to make corrections or act on advice given in marking in order to improve their work.
- Teachers give clear explanations of what pupils are expected to learn. Most pupils know their targets and they are becoming increasingly skilful in checking their progress against the 'steps for success ladders' provided in many lessons.

- The warm and positive relationships that exist between adults and pupils in the school are evident in all classrooms. Pupils respect each other and enjoy the many opportunities which are provided for them to work collaboratively. Pupils are keen to share their ideas and they listen carefully to each other. The school's focus on respect for others underpins all interactions.
- The good range of challenge, support and encouragement provided by the well-trained teaching assistants helps some pupils, particularly those who are disabled or with special educational needs, to achieve well both in class and when working individually and in small groups.
- Early reading skills are taught well. Pupils develop a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils' research skills are well developed and they regularly use the internet to gather information to support their learning. They are able to consider the information critically, for example, by recognising that the evidence they gather may contain bias. The school promotes the enjoyment of reading well.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils reach the standards expected of them for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, achievement requires improvement because the progress made by pupils is uneven across the school. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher levels expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics and the proportion of pupils making better than the expected progress by the end of Year 6 is not consistently high enough, particularly in writing.
- Progress is best in the early years. Children's skills when they join the Nursery and Reception classes vary year-on-year. However, children make consistently good progress because of good teaching and they are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the average standard in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is in line with the national average.
- Decisive action taken by school leaders has improved the teaching of grammar and spelling across the school and, therefore, pupils' achievement. Year 6 pupils reached the nationally expected level in 2014; a big improvement on the low attainment of 2013. Current pupils' books indicate that this achievement is being sustained and improved on.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress they are capable of or reach the higher levels expected of them, given their starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics because the work they are given is not always demanding enough.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time achieve as well as the other pupils, given their starting points and abilities.
- Because their needs are identified quickly, and caring and effective support is provided promptly, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well, given their different starting points and abilities.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 improved so that it was in line with that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and in other schools nationally. However, the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others at the end of Key Stage 2 widened. These pupils were around three terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and others nationally. While some disadvantaged pupils made good progress in 2014, given their starting points and abilities, this was not the case for all pupils. Progress remains uneven for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school although lower down the school attainment gaps are closing.

### The early years provision

### is good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years owing to the good provision. Skill levels on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes vary from year-to-year. Most recently, the skills and understanding of children joining the early years have been closer to those typical for their age than those seen previously, however their communication and language skills are typically lower.
- Children make at least good, and sometimes better, progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because the quality of teaching is consistently good. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved continuously over recent years and is now in line with the national average. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into school. They quickly make new friends, become used to classroom routines and develop good levels of concentration. Well-planned activities capture the interests of children and they learn with increasing confidence and developing independence. Adults offer praise, encourage

children's efforts and ask questions which help to develop children's language skills as well as skills, knowledge and understanding in other areas of learning.

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The progress that children make is tracked carefully and the activities that are provided reflect the interests and needs of children. Welfare arrangements meet requirements well and children are kept safe and secure.
- The individual needs of disabled children and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and specific activities are provided which support them well. As a result, these children achieve well.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105017
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	449350

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barry Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline McCallum
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 334 1432
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 334 9394
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:schooloffice@mendell.wirral.sch.uk">schooloffice@mendell.wirral.sch.uk</a>

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