

Stockton Heath Primary School

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

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leadership and management of the school, at all levels, have continued to strengthen since the previous inspection. There have been significant improvements in teaching, the quality of the learning environment and pupils' progress.
- Leaders' management of teaching and learning is both rigorous and effective and has a good impact on pupils' all-round achievement.
- Governors provide strong challenge and support, and play a crucial part in planning the school's future. They leave no stone unturned in securing its good improvement.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning underpin their good and improving achievement. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils feel entirely safe in school. They arrive punctually and their attendance is good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding. Pupils say that they enjoy learning because there is always lots of activity to challenge them.
- Provision for children in the early years is good and they make good progress from their starting points. Pupils throughout the school build well on their early achievements. The pace of progress is improving rapidly. Standards are rising at both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- There are strong links with parents. They have confidence in the school's leadership and a strong voice in its development; they support it well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as high as they could be, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing are not always matched precisely to their abilities, particularly those of the most-able pupils.
- The quality of handwriting for many pupils in Key Stage 2 is not as good as it should be.
- Systems for marking pupils' work are not used to good effect in writing through the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons across the curriculum.
- The school’s work was discussed with members of staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The response from parents via Ofsted’s online survey (Parent View) did not provide a representative picture because few parents had completed the survey. Inspectors took into account a recent survey of parents’ views conducted by the school, as well as questionnaires completed by staff members.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments; samples of pupils’ work; minutes from governors’ meetings; the school’s own view of its work; external reports, and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Elaine White	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium, is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets current floor standards which are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Provision for children in the early years is full-time in Reception class.
- There is nursery provision, a breakfast club and after-school care on site. These provisions are not managed by the governing body and receive separate reports.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - making sure that expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve in writing are always high enough so that they are always challenged to the full
 - ensuring that pupils respond to teachers' marking, learn from their mistakes and continuously improve their work
 - improving the overall quality of handwriting in Key Stage 2.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since his relatively recent appointment to the school and particularly since the previous inspection, the headteacher has had an immense impact on school improvement. The clarity of his vision for the school's future and his determination to achieve that vision are communicated clearly to the whole school community, and he has won the full support of all.
- The improved quality of the learning environment that reflects the school's ethos and celebrates learning and achievement, impacts strongly on pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes. They respond exceptionally well to the way that every pupil is fully included in school life and the equality of opportunity they have to succeed.
- The school has worked productively with the local authority to address priorities and is now seen as a much improved school that is very able to manage its own continuing improvement.
- Members of the very active senior leadership team provide first-class role models for best classroom practice and relationships in the school. They check on the school's performance thoroughly and support the headteacher, both in determining how well the school is doing and in recognising what needs to be done next to raise standards further, particularly in writing.
- Middle leaders, responsible for subject developments, work imaginatively to provide an exciting curriculum that is tailored well to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils achieve well across all subjects and especially well in art, sports and music where their achievement is particularly impressive.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils are as excited about the school's past (when Roman remains were found during building work) as they are about their plans for its future. Through the curriculum they learn the values of tolerance towards all others, how democracy works and that everyone has responsibilities as well as rights within their communities. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for their lives in modern Britain.
- Rigorous management of teachers' performance by school leaders has been central to the school's good improvement. Previously ineffective teaching has been eliminated through frequent and well-focused checking of teachers' work. Effective training and support for teachers, to develop their skills, has lifted their quality so that teaching is currently consistently good or better. There is no complacency among leaders about raising teaching quality to the highest level, and they work closely with governors to ensure that successful teaching is rewarded and underperformance challenged.
- The primary sport funding is used effectively to improve teaching quality in physical education lessons and increase opportunities for pupils to be active. Resources have been bought so that pupils' needs are more equally matched. Pupils comment on how much they enjoy the increased range of sports during and after school and the chances they have to represent the school in competitive tournaments.
- Leaders and governors are watchful about how the school uses its relatively small amount of pupil premium funding; they address any underlying inequalities effectively and boost the achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school by providing additional support for their learning.
- Leaders check on attendance closely and there are good systems to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Attendance has improved over time and continues to do so. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very well established and maintained. All relevant checks are carried out and staff training is up to date. Staff and pupils know where their responsibilities lie with regard to keeping themselves and others safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has been re-shaped, following previous inspections, and is now a very strong part of the school's leadership. Governors have been appointed who have skills and professional backgrounds that are beneficial to the school's work; they challenge and support the school very effectively. Governors fully understand how assessment data work and they compare the school's academic progress meticulously with schools nationally. While recognising the improvements, governors have been quick to pick up on standards in writing. Governors actively check on the school's work with senior leaders and other staff. They are fully aware of teaching quality in the school, how teachers' performance is managed and how this is linked to the application of the teachers' pay policy. Finances are managed very efficiently to the benefit of pupils, including the careful management of pupil premium and primary school sport funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school and of what they achieve. They are hardly ever late without good reason. Their typically above-average attendance continues to improve. Pupils arrive smartly dressed in their uniforms, ready to learn, having completed their homework from the night before.
- Pupils are full of enthusiasm for the plans they have for the school library area and developments in the playground; they are no less enthusiastic about the work they are given in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Fully attentive while the teacher gives instructions, they settle quickly to work and really enjoy the challenges they get. Pupils often work together with groups or partners and like to solve problems together. Pupils usually finish their work, but sometimes do not pay enough importance to their handwriting in Key Stage 2.
- Around the school, pupils' behaviour, manners and politeness are unfailingly impressive. In the dining room their table manners are impeccable.
- Pupils contribute a great deal to the everyday life of the school. Their respect for adults and real mindfulness of one another reflect the school values fully. Pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example, as school council members or safety officers. They are also represented on the Stakeholder Working Parties with teachers, parents and governors to discuss things such as the homework policy, arrangement for pupils' progress meetings or how best to celebrate pupils' achievements.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Relationships within the school are excellent and pupils say that they always feel completely safe. They are confident that adult help is there for them when needed. A survey of parents' views indicates that they, too, are confident about the level and quality of care the school provides for their children.
- Pupils understand the nature of bullying in all its forms and particularly about potential hazards when using the Internet. They know what they need to do to protect themselves from harm.
- Pupils claim, adamantly, that there is no bullying or offensive name-calling in school, because it has been dealt with very effectively since the headteacher was appointed and involved them in discussions.
- Pupils are very positive about their own behaviour and know how important it is to their good learning.
- By the time pupils move on the next stage of their education, they are exceptionally well equipped with the self-assurance, academic and social skills they need to continue to achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers respond positively to the support they receive from senior leaders and they embrace training and new guidance well to reflect upon, and improve, what they do. This has resulted in significant improvement in teaching and learning throughout the school and pupils' consistently good, and improving, progress.
- Teaching assistants are crucial to the teaching team and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Their subject knowledge is sound and they are particularly good at questioning pupils to help them think through problems. They work effectively with class teachers to check on pupils' work during activities and ensure good progress.
- Mathematics is taught well. The school has adapted to the new primary mathematics curriculum well and there is real vigour and challenge, from staff and pupils, in the way mathematics learning takes place. Using mathematics knowledge and skills to solve problems is the main focus. Pupils learn a new skill, and then use it, for example, to deepen their understanding about area and perimeter, geometry, or to solve algebraic equations. In one lesson there was excellent learning when pupils practised new mental methods for working out, so writing things down step by step was banned. The lesson improved pupils' mental agility very well.
- Discussion is given high priority in literacy lessons. Pupils work very sensibly with each other to test out their ideas, as well as to check on each other's understanding. This means that their ideas are usually clear and they begin to write confidently. Following discussion and testing, some Year 6 pupils were better informed about using apostrophes correctly and Year 3 pupils were more familiar with how to structure more complex and interesting sentences. Both groups used these skills well in their writing that followed.
- Good writing across the curriculum is displayed prominently around the school, indicating how widely

pupils use their writing skills. The work of the most-able writers, however, is not always distinguishable, in books and displays, from that of others. Leaders recognise that teaching does not always provide the most-able writers with precise expectations of what they should achieve. This, together with the lack of emphasis on good handwriting, holds back pupils from making the very best progress in writing.

- Learning is good across other subjects. During the inspection, good progress was seen in science, physical education and geography. There is special provision for music and art, and the quality of pupils' learning in those subjects is outstanding.
- Regular progress reviews enable staff to keep track of how well pupils are doing and to plan their next steps. In this way, pupils' varying abilities are, for the most part, well provided for. Learning builds well on what pupils already know. There is some good marking of pupils' work and evidence of pupils doing corrections when directed to do so. The quality of marking in writing is not consistent, however, and pupils do not always correct their mistakes or follow the advice given to them.

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- From broadly typical starting points for their age on entering Reception class, pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who achieved the expected standards in phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) in 2014 equalled the national average. This proportion is set to increase as children's stronger preparation in the early years takes effect.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build well on their good start in school. They are taught well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved in 2014 and pupils' work shows that they are on track to rise again in the current year due to the good progress made.
- National data suggest that pupils' progress faltered in the past at the end of Key Stage 2. The explanation for that is inaccurate assessments of their attainment at Key Stage 1 which led to unreliable expectations at Key Stage 2. From their actual starting points, pupils made at least expected progress and a significant number did better than expected in reading in 2014. Good progress, currently, throughout Years 3 to 6 has been securely established and it is rapidly gathering pace.
- In the 2014 national tests, standards in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling were significantly above national averages in Year 6. Mathematics standards were above average while those in writing remained close to average. School assessments and pupils' work show that pupils are on track to improve on those performances in the current year. This is a good picture, over time, of the school's improvement since the previous inspection and a clear indication of the strength of school leadership.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. In Year 2 they show good levels of enjoyment and good development of the skills they need to tackle reading confidently. By Year 6 pupils read widely and are knowledgeable about the works of past and current authors. They understand the importance of being able to read well and the kinds of reading they will need to do. The standards they achieve are, overall, above average.
- Daily lessons from a specialist mathematics teacher challenge the most-able pupils in Years 4 to 6. Those in Year 6 were seen to make excellent progress during the inspection, working at a level well beyond that expected for their age. There are also regular booster classes for the most-able writers, in response to the issue identified by the school. It is acknowledged that expectations of those pupils should remain consistently high, whatever subject they write in. Pupils who achieved Level 3 in writing or mathematics at Key Stage 1 in 2014 generally made expected progress to Level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2. Few, however, made better than expected progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Clear procedures are firmly place for identifying pupils who need additional help and for meeting those needs. The quality of teaching and other support they receive is good.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was very low. Comparisons with national data would, therefore, be statistically unreliable. The school manages the pupil premium funding effectively, nevertheless, and school assessments indicate that gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school close quickly. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points and some make better than expected progress in reading and writing.

The early years provision **is good**

- When children enter Reception class their abilities are generally typical for their age in the important areas

of personal development, communication skills and physical development. Good provision for them, with many exciting challenges, ensures that they make good progress and develop their skills and knowledge well.

- By the end of Reception, most reach a good level of development in all that they do and significant proportions exceed expectations in mathematical and personal development and their understanding of the world around them.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Activities are planned thoughtfully, whether they are to be led by adults or for the children to choose for themselves. The outdoor area provides many challenges for children to explore their world, communicate with others, solve problems and develop good physical skills. Indoors, learning is focused well on new knowledge and skills that build well on what children already can do and that can be followed up in their play.
- Children's behaviour and their safety are managed very well. Teachers' expectations are high and they are very sensitive to children's particular needs. Children quickly settle to routines, learn to behave as they should and consider others. They develop good friendships and learn well alongside one another.
- Leadership and management in the early years are good. The leader is very knowledgeable about children's development and how they learn. She shares her knowledge and good practice with the early years team to ensure that all children are well prepared to move into Year 1 when their time comes. Parents are encouraged to share in the process of their children's learning. These good relationships and the trust they foster strengthen children's feeling of security and well-being so that they enjoy their learning all the more.

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	453456

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Brougham
Headteacher	Dan Harding
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2013
Telephone number	01925 215640
Fax number	01925 215641
Email address	stocktonheath_primary@warrington.gov.uk

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