

Hoole Church of England Primary School

Hoole Lane, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 3HB

Inspection dates 3–4 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- The clear vision of the headteacher, supported effectively by all leaders, staff and members of the governing body, ensures that leadership and management at all levels are good.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the early years and quickly become confident, happy learners.
- All groups of pupils, which include pupils from minority ethnic groups, those at an early stage of learning English and those who join the school other than at the start of the school year, make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics for the pupils are average over time.
- Teaching is good. Pupils engage well with their teachers and show a strong determination to succeed in their academic and personal lives.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and, at times, outstanding. Pupils feel safe and secure because of their good relationships with each other and their belief that, in their words, 'Adults, in our school, sort out any problems.'
- A wealth of experiences within the interesting curriculum gives pupils a deeper understanding of the world and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. As a result, pupils are effective young citizens of modern Britain.
- A culture of high ambition, welcome, care and inclusion abounds and the school motto 'let your light shine' is evident.
- The improvements shown to the quality of teaching and achievement since the previous inspection mean that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to extend their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils do not consistently apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations.
- The skills of middle leaders, in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum, are not fully effective.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited parts of lessons in every class, discussed the views of pupils' learning with them and carried out a scrutiny of the work completed in pupils' books.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher and a learning walk was carried out in the early years and Years 1 and 2 with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body.
- Telephone conversations were held with a representative of the local authority and the School Improvement Partner.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read, and spoke formally and informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors took account of the 56 responses received at the time of the inspection from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the views of the parents with whom inspectors spoke.
- The inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Additional Inspector
Schelene Ferris	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language has increased significantly since the previous inspection and is currently above average. There are 17 different languages spoken in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the start of the school year, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Early years provision in the Reception class is available full time.
- Seven maternity leaves have taken place and seven new teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection in 2011.
- The school works in close partnership with the pre-school provider which shares the site. However, this is not managed by the school's governing body and is, therefore, subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to extend their writing skills across a range of subjects as well as in English
 - pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations
 - middle leaders are more effective in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The drive and commitment of the headteacher have led to improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection and higher standards throughout the school.
- Her strong leadership is evident in the way she has, together with the governing body, addressed challenging situations, such as managing changes to staffing and the increasing proportion of pupils starting during the school year. This has not prevented pupils from receiving a good level of education.
- Throughout the school, good behaviour flourishes in, as the school proudly proclaims, 'A place to be, A place to grow.'
- The headteacher and senior leaders rigorously check how well pupils are learning. They hold regular meetings with teachers to make sure that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and helped to keep up with their classmates.
- The appraisal system, which links teachers' pay to the progress of pupils in their class, ensures that all teachers understand the high expectations of them. Teachers told inspectors that they are well supported by senior staff and get the training and support they need to help them meet their targets.
- Leadership is good but not outstanding because middle leaders are not yet fully effective in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in the subjects they manage.
- The local authority and consultants provide good support by providing training courses and additional high-quality advice. The school has formed strong partnerships with local schools, the pre-school and consultants so that staff can share expertise and develop their skills.
- Parents think highly of the school and are generally very positive about their children's experiences in school. They are particularly pleased with the improved communication channels, for instance, through the website and the efficient and effective text message system. This results in them feeling better informed.
- Pupils say activities in lessons are interesting and exciting and help them develop an awareness of other times and cultures as well as issues in their own local environment. For example, when studying the Stone Age, pupils in Year 2 not only found out and wrote about life in early times but made houses and cooking pots while outdoors in their forest school. Such experiences bring their learning to life in a practical and meaningful way.
- The strength of outdoor learning is such that other schools come to see it in action, in order to support their own development of this aspect of pupils' education.
- Respect and welcome for all are experienced first-hand as pupils 'buddy up' with new pupils, many of whom do not speak or understand English. This helps pupils to settle into the school quickly. Events such as a 'Diversity Food Day' are held to celebrate the rich range of different cultures and religions within the school community. Such activities prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- As a result of well-spent primary school sport funding, pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and the range of sports clubs on offer. The money pays for a specialist sports coach to teach lessons and provide training for teachers. This has encouraged more participation in competitive sports, reintroduced basketball and allowed pupils to sample new activities such as tennis.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. While some is used to make sure that no pupil misses out on activities for financial reasons, much of the funding supports academic achievement. Additional adults provide high-quality one-to-one or small group support for eligible pupils to help them catch up with their peers.
- Topics studied in philosophy lessons, such as reflecting on the qualities of forgiveness or taking part in democracy days help pupils learn to understand how parliament works and they use this structure when electing their own councillors for road safety, eco or class representation. These activities equip them well for their future lives.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted extremely well through the curriculum and the varied range of experiences on offer. For example, social skills are developed through many after-school clubs, such as choir, dance and netball.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively. It fosters good relations with all. It also makes sure that all groups of pupils achieve well and are able to participate fully in school life, regardless of background or ability.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account has improved well in recent years. It now balances support for the school with challenge to help it do better.

- Governors fully understand the school’s strengths, identify the areas to improve and rigorously check the achievement of all the different groups of pupils. This includes holding termly Saturday morning workshops to evaluate aspects of teaching and learning in detail. They scrutinise data about how well the school is performing when compared with other schools and strive to achieve the best they can for the pupils.
- They have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and ensure systems for managing staff performance are rigorous and fully linked to teachers’ performance and to salary progressions. They ensure that teachers only receive financial reward if their pupils reach their attainment and achievement targets.
- With the support of the highly effective bursar, they manage the school’s finances well, and have successfully reversed a deficit into a surplus. They oversee the impact of extra funding, the pupil premium and primary school sport funding, for example, on the personal and academic achievement of the pupils for whom it is intended.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully effective and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite to adults and to each other. Movement about the school is generally calm and purposeful. Spontaneous thanks and apologies, as appropriate, reflect the school’s focus on good manners, respect and tolerance for others.
- Pupils take roles of responsibility seriously. Pupils told inspectors how their views are taken into consideration. For example, eco warriors have worked hard on increasing recycling facilities in school and the safety council members consulted their classmates on their views on road safety and when using computers. As a result of their findings, pupils develop leadership skills well.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection felt most pupils behave well. They said that the behaviour system of sanctions and rewards works well, but appreciated that some pupils find good behaviour difficult. They show a mature tolerance of these pupils and said that inappropriate behaviour very rarely disrupts their lessons.
- Teachers and learning support assistants manage the challenging behaviour from a few pupils very well. The school works closely with parents and offers a wide range of support to help these pupils settle into school life.
- Pupils are extremely positive about their learning. They say that the teachers help them understand how they can improve their work. They say, ‘Teachers listen and help us’.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is secure and pupils say they feel safe because they know all the doors are protected so that only staff can move from one part of the school to the other.
- Pupils told inspectors that they were confident they could go to an adult if they had a problem and that the adult would listen to them.
- All teachers and other adults, particularly the learning mentor and deputy headteacher, contribute to the caring, nurturing environment that prompts pupils to say that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They understand how different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, can affect people’s lives and make them unhappy.
- Pupils told inspectors how they could stay safe when using the internet and understood why precautions are necessary. They say, ‘We would press the dolphin button if we were concerned when using the computer and an adult would sort out the problem.’
- Pupils learn the importance of taking care, without being afraid to have a go at new experiences, when making dens or campfires at forest school, for example. As a result, they have fun and thoroughly enjoy school.
- The school has worked closely with parents to make sure their children attend regularly. As a result, attendance has improved and is now above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall across the school, with examples of outstanding practice. Most parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are taught well.
- Good subject knowledge enables teachers to plan lessons which make sure pupils of different abilities are challenged appropriately. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils are capable of achieving and most pupils respond well and are fully engaged and motivated to learn in lessons.
- The more able pupils make good progress because teachers build effectively on what they already know. Tasks are designed to make sure they learn new information and skills without having to go over the same work again. For instance, in Year 6 literacy, pupils confidently identify features needed for report writing and confidently explain their language choices and how these will improve their work.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. They are well supported by additional adults in the classroom. The adults are well briefed by the class teachers so that they are clear about the learning that needs to take place. On occasions, pupils have additional help in small groups or individually as needed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are quickly identified and appropriate support provided. The special educational needs leader checks regularly to make sure that the help is effective, as the pupils' needs change.
- Mathematics is taught well. The progress pupils make is accelerating and achievement is improving. While pupils' progress is good and improved well, particularly for the more able, in the end of Year 6 tests in 2014, it is not outstanding overall because pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations.
- Improvements since the previous inspection in the way reading is taught have resulted in rising standards in reading and particularly in Key Stage 1. Children in the Reception classes start to learn the sounds letters make and how to use them in their reading and writing. This knowledge is developed well through Key Stage 1.
- During the inspection, inspectors noted that pupils used these skills well to read unfamiliar words. By Year 2, most pupils read fluently and confidently.
- Writing is taught well and pupils make good progress. However, while pupils learn writing skills in literacy lessons, they do not have enough opportunities to practise and reinforce these skills in other subjects.
- Most teachers give helpful guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work, especially in literacy and numeracy. Pupils act on the advice. Pupils confidently assess their own and the work of their classmates. As a result, they learn to praise and advise their peers in how to improve their learning.
- Teachers extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively through topics which allow pupils to reflect on and discuss feelings, rights and responsibilities, differences in cultures and religious belief. This extends pupils' respect for and tolerance and understanding of others well.
- Effective homework and 'catch up' clubs enable pupils to consolidate and extend previous learning and practise skills they may have been less confident about in past lessons.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils is good. School information and work in books show that pupils make good progress in all year groups. From starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 1 which are just below national proportions, the progress pupils make means that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2.
- Test results overall were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. This suggested that pupils had not made enough progress since they left Key Stage 1. However, about one fifth of this class had joined the school during Key Stage 2 with a larger number than usual learning English as an additional language.
- Although test results were average overall, school records show that all the pupils in the class and, particularly those who have been in the school for the longest period of time, made at least good progress from their starting points.
- The results of the 2014 national screening check on how well Year 1 pupils understand phonics (the sounds letters represent) were above average. This shows a rising trend over three years as result of changes in the way reading is taught.
- The popular reading club and whole-class reading sessions including books on-line, allow pupils to come together to enjoy reading in a relaxed environment. By the time they reach Year 6, they have a good knowledge of different authors and use this information to help them choose new books.

- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have special educational needs or are at the early stages of learning English, was behind other pupils in the school in mathematics by four terms and by three terms in reading and writing. In relation to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, they were four terms behind in mathematics and three terms behind in reading and writing. School evidence shows that attainment gaps are closing rapidly.
- School information shows that, from their individual starting points, the progress of the disadvantaged pupils compared to both other non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and nationally was good in 2014.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make at least as much good progress as their peers and some make more.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. They are well supported in lessons, in small groups or on a one-to-one basis as appropriate to their specific needs.

The early years provision

is good

- Early years provision is good. Early years staff make sure that their classes provide a safe, vibrant and exciting environment which supports children's learning. As a result, children are happy, confident and well behaved.
- The staff plan and design activities well to develop all skills, but especially literacy and numeracy as these skills are generally weaker than those typical for their age when they start school.
- Some pupils start with some personal skills which are considerably weaker than those of other pupils. However, the good progress children make strengthens skills and narrows any gaps. Children leave the Reception classes with skills much closer to those typical for their age. The proportion who achieved a good level of development in 2014 was just below that found nationally, but represented an improvement on previous years.
- Under the good leadership of the early years leader, teaching is good and children's progress is rigorously tracked. The resulting information is used to plan activities which build on previous learning and experiences.
- Adults talk to children about their learning, developing their language and checking understanding. They model good social skills, such as when they are playing together and sharing equipment. Children respond well.
- Children enjoy learning from the many and varied activities they are given or choose for themselves. Good use is made of the outdoor areas for different activities and these areas overall match the high-quality provision that is provided indoors. However, opportunities are missed for children to experience the outdoor area in all weathers.
- Good communication with parents means that they feel well informed about their children's learning.
- Close liaison with Key Stage 1 teachers ensures a smooth transition from the Reception classes and children's positive attitudes to learning mean that they are well prepared for the move to Year 1.

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	134248
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	456181

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hull
Headteacher	Cheryl Bullen
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2011
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