

Penketh South Community Primary School

Finlay Avenue, Penketh, Cheshire, WA5 2PN

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' progress varies across subjects and ability groups. By the end of Year 6 too many of the most able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable. Achievement in writing lags behind that in mathematics and reading.
- Teaching does not build on what pupils already know and can do quickly enough to enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress from their starting points. The work set for pupils is not always sufficiently challenging.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to practise reading and writing skills in other subjects or use mathematical skills to reason and solve problems.
- Marking does not sufficiently help pupils to improve their work because it varies across year groups.
- Leaders do not use the information gained from their checks on teaching and pupils' progress to provide teachers with incisive guidance to improve teaching and achievement. Leaders' improvement planning lacks tight timescales and sharp targets.
- Governors have not focused fully on checking that all actions have the intended impact.
- Subject and middle leaders do not have sufficient impact in improving teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Provision in the early years requires improvement. Assessment is not always used well enough to make sure all children make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have correctly identified key strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance. Leaders' actions are beginning to improve aspects of teaching and raise achievement. This demonstrates a capacity to improve the school further.
- Behaviour is good and procedures to keep pupils safe are good. Pupils enjoy school. They behave well, feel safe, are well-cared-for and keen to learn.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they receive effective support.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered effectively. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time including observing teaching and learning in lessons.
- The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading skills and talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- Inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times and visited the dining hall at lunchtime. They also observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to them about their work.
- Inspectors met with six governors. They spoke to two representatives of the local authority and also met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of returns to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress and school improvement and external views of the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- One of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school for one day to gather additional evidence.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steven Ellis

Additional Inspector

Jean Olsson-Law

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on role has increased since the previous inspection. The proportion of boys and girls varies across year groups.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium has increased and is now similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school currently has an acting deputy headteacher.
- 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.
- The school offers flexible provision in the Nursery class, which serves several different primary schools in the area. A number of children also join the school at the start of Reception.
- The Nursery offers provision for two-year-olds which is inspected separately and does not form part of this inspection. A privately run out-of-school club operates on the school site, which is also subject to separate inspection arrangements. These inspection reports may be viewed at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is good or better to bring about rapid improvements in pupils' achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - build on what pupils already know and can do when setting work and in teaching lessons
 - have high expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve and set work that is sufficiently challenging
 - make sure teachers' marking helps pupils to know how to improve their work and adds to their knowledge and skills, in line with the school's policy
 - use assessment effectively in the early years so activities are well designed to enable all children, especially the most able, to make good progress.
- Improve pupils' achievement by deepening their understanding in reading, writing and mathematics, in order to raise attainment across all year groups, particularly for the most able, by ensuring that pupils:
 - develop and practise their writing skills in all subjects
 - learn to use increasingly complex and grammatically correct sentences in their written work
 - develop their reasoning and thinking skills when they solve mathematical problems.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - information gained from checks on teaching, pupils' progress and pupils' work and subsequent analysis provides teachers with more incisive feedback on how they can quicken pupils' progress
 - improvement planning has tight timescales and sharp targets
 - the roles of subject and middle leaders are developed so they contribute fully to improving teaching
 - governors develop their skills in checking the impact of leaders' actions.

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

- Leaders have not been effective enough in ensuring that all pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, progress is uneven across year groups.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding what is working well and what needs to improve across the school. Strategic priorities are identified clearly in school improvement planning; however, targets and timescales are not always sharp enough to enable leaders and governors to assess the impact fully.
- Senior leaders regularly track the progress of all pupils, observe lessons and check pupils' work. However, information from this monitoring is not analysed fully. While strengths and weaknesses are identified during each activity and fed back to staff, they are not collated in order to provide teachers with appropriately incisive feedback on the most important aspects that need to improve.
- Leaders' expectations are made clear to teachers. These include, for example, expectations regarding pupils' presentation of their work, use of grammar and guidance on marking. However, these higher expectations are not yet routine in all classes and consequently pupils' progress is too variable.
- Subject and middle leaders do not have enough of an impact in bringing about improvement in teaching. The subject improvement plans are not sharply focused on what is needed to develop teachers' skills and ensure teaching builds on pupils' knowledge and skills continuously.
- Leaders manage the performance of staff appropriately. Salary increases are linked to performance and targets are set for teachers to raise the achievement of groups of pupils who need to make faster progress. Leaders have taken action to improve teaching and provide additional support for pupils where there is evidence of under achievement.
- Leaders ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent appropriately and check how well they are performing. An evaluation of the impact of the spending of the pupil premium was not, however, available for parents on the school's website at the time of the inspection.
- Pupils' awareness of other faiths is good. Assemblies, visits and events such as those attended by the choir, enthuse pupils and enrich their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are tolerant of others. These skills and attitudes prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- School leaders use the primary sports funding effectively to secure a suitable range of physical activities for pupils. Coaches provide specialist sessions for pupils as well as developing the skills of teaching staff. Many after-school clubs promote an active and healthy lifestyle. For example, pupils show great enthusiasm for the regular gymnastic club and develop some excellent skills.
- A harmonious community exists and staff foster good relationships; discrimination of any form is not tolerated. The school strives to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all. However, the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders have worked effectively to adapt the curriculum to reflect the new national requirements. The themes around which teachers plan the work for pupils are interesting and give them suitable opportunities to find out about the wider world and life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy the way subjects are brought together in topics; however, reading, writing and mathematics skills are not developed well enough in other subjects. The school offers a wide range of visits and after-school clubs which motivate pupils and enhance the curriculum well.
- Leaders and governors have the capacity to improve the school. As a result of actions taken by the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, some aspects of teaching have begun to improve. For example, pupils now produce more work and some teachers' marking has improved.
- Parents are supportive of the school and its leaders.
- Leaders including governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- In December 2014, the local authority increased the support it provides for the school; this is beginning to lead to improvement but developments are at an early stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an understanding of the school's key strengths and aspects that need to improve, gained through formal visits to the school and by asking questions about performance. Governors have begun to strengthen the quality of challenge and support they provide but they are not sufficiently adept at checking the impact of actions in the school's development plan.
 - There are suitable performance management arrangements for the headteacher and teaching staff. Governors ensure that salary increases are only granted where there is secure evidence of improvement and targets have been met.

- The governing body is currently being re-constituted and governors have reviewed the skills they bring to the role and re-organised their work as a result. This is leading to more rigorous challenge of school leaders.
- Governors check that the spending of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and sport funding, is making a difference to the pupils it is meant to support. A full report about the sports funding is available on the school website. However, parents do not have enough information about what difference the pupil premium is making for disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is average and pupils arrive at school on time.
- Pupils are courteous and polite, providing a friendly welcome for visitors. They behave well around school, on the playground and in class.
- Pupils settle quickly in lessons and concentrate well. They display positive attitudes towards learning and try hard to do their best. Pupils are keen to share their ideas and listen readily to their teachers, other adults and each other.
- Pupils' presentation of their work in their books has improved and they try hard to develop a neat cursive handwriting style. Senior leaders have identified the need for pupils to write more regularly and at greater length. Pupils have responded well to this; they are keen to write and take a pride in their work.
- School councillors plan fundraising activities and contribute well to the decision making processes in the school. Older pupils help the younger ones and enjoy taking on responsible roles, for example, by sorting the fruit out for classes or playing with the Nursery children during their breaks.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school rules and rewards systems and think that the adults apply these fairly.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they use the internet. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying including cyber-bullying and older pupils can talk sensibly about why racism is wrong. They are able to describe the differences between bullying and falling out as friends. They say that bullying is rare and they trust the adults to sort out any issues quickly.
- Pupils show empathy, respect and understanding for the beliefs and customs of others.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and those who spoke to the inspectors in school say that their children are happy, kept safe and behave well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time is not good enough to ensure all pupils make continuously good progress; however, actions taken by senior leaders are beginning to bring about improvements.
- Where teaching is most successful, teachers give clear explanations, provide good visual aids to support learning and question pupils effectively. These skills were seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, where pupils gained a good understanding of equivalent fractions.
- Most teachers demand sufficient work from pupils in lessons, but overall their expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough. Consequently, work is not always set at the right level of challenge for all pupils. The most able pupils, in particular, sometimes find their work is too easy.
- Teachers do not develop pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics well enough across all subjects. There are too few opportunities for pupils to stretch their thinking and reasoning and to deepen their understanding through solving problems. Teachers do not systematically develop pupils' use of grammar and punctuation, particularly when they write in subjects other than English.
- Leaders recognise that the teaching of writing is variable and assessment is inaccurate in some year groups. They are using external moderation to ensure pupils' performance is accurately assessed. A suitably wide range of pupils' work is considered by teachers to enable them to assess achievement

securely.

- Strategies to improve the teaching of reading, including additional guided reading sessions and focused support, have a positive impact. Pupils read confidently and talk with great enthusiasm about their favourite books and characters.
- Teachers' marking is helping some pupils to aim higher. However, marking is not yet having a consistent impact across the school and pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn from the guidance provided and correct their mistakes.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and ensure that pupils enjoy what they are learning and behave well. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a strong team. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach the standard expected of them for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in Year 2 is broadly average.
- The progress made by different groups of pupils is variable across the school. The middle and lower ability pupils generally make good progress in reading and mathematics from their starting points. Progress in writing is patchy for pupils of all ability because teaching does not build on pupils' writing skills systematically over time.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress they should because they do not have enough opportunities to work at the highest levels of which they are capable, especially in reading and writing.
- School data and inspection evidence indicate that progress has started to speed up, although the rates of progress made by pupils in different year groups is still uneven. Leaders are aware that standards vary across year groups. They are tackling issues in teaching and ensuring pupils receive support to make more rapid progress. In the current Year 6 most pupils are working at the level expected for their age or above.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the national phonics check in 2014 was below average (this assesses pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make). Leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching of phonics and pupils currently in Year 1 are on track to meet the expected standard.
- There is a good level of care for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Support in class and individual support from teaching assistants enables them to achieve well. The personalised support builds on their different abilities and so they make good progress from their different starting points.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and nationally are narrowing. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils achieved particularly well in mathematics as they reached standards at least a term ahead of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and two terms ahead of other pupils nationally. In writing they achieved standards similar to other pupils in school but were two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. They were a term behind others in school and other pupils nationally in reading.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery class with a range of knowledge and skills. A sizeable proportion has skills below those typical for their age, particularly in physical development and communication, language and literacy.
- Achievement in the early years requires improvement because children's progress from their starting points is variable. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception improved in 2014 to be at least in line with the national average. Children generally make most progress in their personal and social development, communication and language and physical development. Those who start their schooling in the Nursery class achieve better than those who just have one year in Reception.
- Teaching requires improvement as it has not promoted consistently good achievement over time. Actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching are resulting in more rapid progress in the current year. A wide range of activities capture children's interests well. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and tasks which children can choose from. Children quickly become confident, curious, interested learners and are suitably prepared for their move to Year 1.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress because their individual needs are identified quickly. Leaders work with parents and outside

agencies to ensure that the right kind of support is provided. A number of children receive good quality individual support from teaching assistants.

- Children's behaviour is good. They settle well and quickly become used to the school's routines. Children play happily together and learn how to take turns and share the resources provided. Warm relationships exist between children and adults. Children rise to the adults' high expectations of behaviour and feel safe and secure.
- The older Nursery children play sensibly with the two year olds who attend the setting. For example, children had huge fun making a track from crates and pieces of wood and practising their balancing skills as they made their way across the obstacles. Great levels of concentration were evident as almost all children joined in this busy activity. The older ones showed a great deal of patience as the younger children took their turn. All enjoyed the activity immensely.
- Leadership of the early years provision requires improvement. The leader of the early years ensures that children are happy and kept safe and that detailed records are kept of children's achievement. Regular checks are made on how well children are doing on a day-to-day basis. However, assessment of children's knowledge and skills when they enter the reception class is not used as well as it could be to make sure all children make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Parents are highly positive and appreciate the way staff care for their children. Learning journey records are organised well. They are attractive and take good account of information about what children do at home.

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	111198
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	456164

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	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Messenger
Headteacher	Angela Grace
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2012
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