

# Werneth Primary School

Coppice Street, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 4BL

## Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The many changes to leadership and staffing have hindered the pace of school improvement. Leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are good.
- Pupils' progress is inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- Pupils' progress in reading is weaker than in writing or mathematics.
- Leaders' systems for tracking pupils' progress are still developing and are not yet established to give the most accurate picture of pupils' progress.
- Teaching does not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Some staff lack confidence in the teaching of reading, including phonic skills.
- Homework is not used well to promote and develop pupils' learning.
- The school's marking policy is not consistently implemented.
- Local governance is not fully established.
- Many parents express a lack of confidence in the school's leadership.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed principal, other senior leaders and the trust have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Some aspects of the school's work are beginning to improve.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy school and learn to develop respectful relationships. Attendance has improved and persistent absence has decreased since the school became an academy.
- Improvements to the early years environment and teaching mean that children make good progress from their starting points.
- Improvements to the leadership and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are improving outcomes for these pupils.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - establishing local governance to more effectively hold leaders to account
  - more firmly establishing new systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to secure greater progress
  - taking further action to establish a more positive partnership with parents
  - ensuring that the school's marking and feedback policy is effectively implemented.
- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils by:
  - ensuring consistently high expectations and challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
  - improving teachers' and teaching assistants' skills in the teaching of reading, including phonics
  - improving the consistency of homework to support learning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since becoming an academy, the school has been through a period of turbulence, with several changes of principal and many staff changes. This has hindered leaders' effectiveness in bringing about improvements in teaching and outcomes.
- The support of the trust has not ensured stability in leadership. However, some weaker teaching has been eradicated and, since September 2016, staffing and leadership have been stable. The trust members have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and are providing a good level of support to the current leadership team.
- Changes to leadership, staffing and local governance have had a negative impact on parents' views of the school. Of the 48 responses to Parent View, 38% of parents would not recommend the school to another parent and a similar percentage did not agree that the school was well led and managed. Many of the parents who spoke to inspectors, and 40% of those who responded by text to Ofsted, expressed concern over the instability of leadership and staffing since the school became an academy.
- Senior leaders and the trust have acknowledged that, at times, communication has not been effective and are striving to re-establish a more positive partnership with parents. They value the partnership with parents in helping to move the school forward. The school's own questionnaire, issued to parents in November 2016, showed a more positive view of the school than was found at inspection. Inspection evidence indicates that the partnership with parents requires improvement.
- The principal, trust representatives and other senior leaders share a commitment to providing the best education for pupils. Leaders, including the new principal, have an accurate view of the school's performance and its priorities for improvement. Plans are in place to address these priorities but it is too early to see the impact of most actions to date.
- Leaders have adapted systems for assessing pupils' progress in learning. The current system is becoming established, but is not consistently well understood, so that all staff, middle and senior leaders have the most accurate view of pupils' progress.
- The recently appointed principal has established a more robust system for monitoring the quality of teaching. As a result, senior leaders have an accurate view of teaching and what needs to improve. Some aspects of teaching are improving as a result, but weaknesses in the teaching of reading and phonics remain.
- Since the school has become an academy, leaders have brought about improvements to the leadership of early years and special educational needs. They have improved attendance and reduced persistent absence. Staffing is now stable. Leaders have a good awareness of the school's priorities and plans to address them, which are being implemented. This means that leadership is appropriately placed to take the school forward.
- The pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide teaching support for pupils and to fund incentives to improve attendance. There is evidence that pupils' progress is improving in some year groups, and differences are beginning to diminish between

the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. However, this is not consistent across year groups and progress for the most able disadvantaged pupils in particular requires improvement.

- Government funding for physical education and sport is used appropriately. The employment of a sports coach has increased staff expertise in teaching physical education. Some pupils have the opportunity to take part in sporting competitions, and the school is working to increase these opportunities.
- The use of funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved recently. It is currently used appropriately to provide teaching support for individuals and groups. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has ensured a more robust and consistent approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's provision, which is improving pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Positive relationships are a strength of the school and pupils learn to respect those of different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. Pupils are further prepared for life in modern Britain as they show a good understanding of democracy and its importance. They have the opportunity to attend after-school sports clubs, as well as activities within school time, such as music lessons, which promote their all-round development.

### **Governance of the school**

- The trust holds all formal responsibilities for governance. It has recently established a new system of governance, which has yet to take full effect. The recently established Accountability, Review and Challenge group (ARC), comprising trust members with an independent chair, makes sure that it is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the progress being made by different groups of pupils. The minutes of the ARC's first meeting show that leaders are being held to account through robust questions and challenge about the school's performance.
- The introduction of the new structure aims to establish a 'drive team' to provide local governance in place of a local governing body. Other than one very recent appointment, the trust has not yet been successful in recruiting members for the drive team. This lack of local governance is hindering the overall effectiveness of governance, as monitoring of the school's performance and decisions are not informed by the local knowledge and expertise which the drive team aims to provide.
- The trust has recently enlisted the support of an independent adviser to support them in reviewing and improving governance. It is too early to see the impact of this work.
- The trust ensures that the school works within its budget and that funding is used appropriately.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A positive culture of safeguarding is evident in the school. Staff have up-to-date training and know the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child.

- Staff and leaders work well with parents and other agencies to meet the needs of pupils identified as needing support.
- The school has worked effectively to improve attendance levels and reduce levels of persistent absence.
- Parents report they are confident the school keeps their children safe.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often not high enough. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of reading varies across the school. At times, the teaching of phonics and reading skills by teachers and teaching assistants is not effective in developing pupils' understanding. For example, some teaching assistants lack confidence in teaching phonics skills and teachers' questioning does not consistently provide challenge.
- Staff expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are not high enough. Sometimes, activities do not provide enough challenge and, on these occasions, the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Often there is a lack of probing questioning to develop pupils' skills in thinking critically. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that their work was sometimes too easy.
- The setting of homework differs considerably across the school. Some pupils and parents report that homework is set at different times and that pupils do not always receive feedback on it. This uneven approach means that homework is not fully effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- The school has a marking and feedback policy which is not yet applied consistently by teachers. As a result, in some classes, pupils do not receive effective feedback to help them to develop their learning further.
- Writing is generally well taught. Pupils have opportunities to apply their writing skills in different subjects. Where progress is most effective, pupils are questioned effectively and challenged to understand the styles and purposes of writing. For example, Year 6 pupils were highly engaged in learning about the purpose and structure of a non-chronological report, as questioning stretched their thinking about the reasoning behind the structure, and how to apply this understanding to their own writing.
- At times, the most able pupils' writing skills are not extended. Pupils sometimes complete the same work, or are not questioned sufficiently to encourage them to think and deepen their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Staff show a secure knowledge of their subject. Pupils' understanding is developed well and misconceptions addressed effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2, learning about the concept of 'greater than' and 'less than', were effectively encouraged to explain their reasoning and then resolve their misconceptions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say that they are happy and enjoy school. They say that they feel safe and that they are expected to behave well.
- Pupils show pride in their school. They relish their responsibilities as, for example, ambassadors and school council members. Some pupils have roles as befrienders and they enjoy caring for other pupils at breaktimes.
- Pupils show a good knowledge of how to stay safe in school and at home, including online safety. They can explain the different types of bullying, including racial and homophobic bullying, and report that it is a rare occurrence in school. They are confident that staff would deal with any incidences that occurred.
- The school is a harmonious community. School records show that incidences of bullying or racial incidents are very rare and are dealt with effectively by staff.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They behave well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are punctual to lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and engage well with their learning. They are keen to complete their activities and this contributes positively to their progress. Very occasionally, pupils become distracted where learning is not meeting their needs.
- Attendance of pupils is improving, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The school has put in place incentives to encourage regular attendance. It has also worked hard with parents to ensure that the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is reducing. Current attendance is very close to the national average and persistent absence has reduced.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Requires improvement**

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. Progress is stronger in mathematics and writing than in reading. The 2016 results indicated that pupils had made mediocre progress in reading from key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 and strong progress in mathematics. Progress in writing was not significantly different from the national average.
- Evidence from pupils' books, observations of learning and the school's information show that current pupils are making the progress expected of them. In some year groups and subjects, particularly in mathematics and writing, some pupils are making rapid progress.
- In 2016 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was well below the national average and represented a decline from the previous year's result. Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils' progress in

phonics in improving.

- The most able pupils often do not make the progress of which they are capable. In 2016 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 and key stage 2, were below national averages. Inspection evidence indicates that the current most able pupils are not making consistently good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is variable across year groups. In some year groups, there is evidence that the progress of these pupils is accelerating and that differences are beginning to diminish between their progress and that of other pupils nationally. However, this is not consistent across the school and the difference remains wide for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Historic published data shows that progress for this group has not been good in the past. However, under the leadership of the new coordinator for special educational needs, the progress of current pupils is improving.

### **Early years provision**

**Good**

- Children enter Nursery and Reception classes with starting points that are often much lower than those typical for their age. As a result of good teaching they make good progress and a growing number attain a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. This means that children are increasingly well prepared to begin Year 1.
- Changes to the leadership of early years in 2016 led to significant improvements in the learning environment and quality of teaching. The current early years leader has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and has clear plans for further improvement.
- Children are interested and engaged in the activities staff provide. The environment indoors provides a stimulating setting. Nursery children happily engaged in role-play with staff as they pretended to pack a suitcase. Staff questioned children well to encourage them to think which clothes they would pack and why.
- Staff have a good knowledge of children's skills and capabilities. They make regular assessments of children's learning, which are mostly used well to provide activities to meet needs and develop learning further.
- Staff establish positive relationships with children, helping to build their confidence and self-esteem. Children are confident to talk with staff and each other.
- Staff follow children's interests in learning. A child's request to explore the windy weather led to children exploring outdoors with streamers and bubbles. Children's understanding was deepened as staff asked them to guess what might happen next.
- Children behave well as staff establish clear expectations for their behaviour. Children learn to take turns and to share. In a phonics session they listened well to instructions.

- Staff establish a positive partnership with parents. Parents who spoke with inspectors praised the positive communication with staff and opportunities to support their child's learning. Regular workshops help parents to understand better how to support their children's learning at home.

## School details

Unique reference number	140597
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10022785

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	520
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mary McKeeman
Principal	Conrad North
Telephone number	0161 770 5333
Website	<a href="http://www.wernethprimary.org.uk/">www.wernethprimary.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@wernethprimary.org.uk">info@wernethprimary.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a larger than average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is above the national average.

- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school converted to become an academy in February 2014 and is a member of the Bright Tribe multi-academy trust.
- Since the school became an academy, the trust has appointed three permanent principals and three interim principals. The current principal was appointed as interim principal and became permanent in November 2016.
- The school has had a large number of staff changes since becoming an academy.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Two observations were carried out jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the principal and other senior leaders, the trust's director of school improvement and executive principal. The inspectors also held a meeting with the external adviser for governance and drive team member.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered minutes of governance meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 30 parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted. Inspectors spoke with parents in the school playground as they brought their children to school. Inspectors also considered the results of the schools' own questionnaire issued to parents in November 2016.
- There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire to consider.

## Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maria McGarry	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Bevin	Ofsted Inspector

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