

Wargrave CofE Primary School

Bradlegh Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside WA12 8QL

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, do not make consistently good progress in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching over time at key stage 2 is inconsistent and does not enable pupils to make good progress in writing. The teaching of writing is not as good as the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers do not all have good subject knowledge in teaching writing. Some do not have the skills to show pupils good models for writing and sometimes they allow misconceptions to go uncorrected.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently promote good progress in writing. Teachers do not all take into account what pupils can already do when setting work.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum, and there is not enough focus on the development of subject-specific skills in foundation subjects.
- Leadership is new and has not had time to ensure that all new systems have been embedded so that they have impact.

The school has the following strengths

- Over time, pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading. This is because teachers have very good subject knowledge, which enables them to address misconceptions and set work which challenges pupils of all abilities.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is accelerating in mathematics and in reading. This is because systems are in place to identify gaps in their knowledge and skills and to provide support.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school because they feel safe and said that they love learning.
- The executive headteacher has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. She is well supported by the governors and has acted swiftly to put systems in place to secure improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Provision in early years is good and ensures that children get a good start to school life.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching of writing, so that all pupils make consistently good progress across the school, by:
 - ensuring that next steps in early years provide a clear focus on writing
 - ensuring a consistent approach across the school to the development and correction of basic skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - ensuring that pupils have a context for writing and understand the purpose of what they are doing
 - providing good models for writing to show pupils what success looks like
 - making sure that pupils' errors and misconceptions are addressed
 - providing pupils with opportunities for writing in foundation subjects
 - ensuring that teachers use information about how well pupils are learning in writing to set work which matches their ability
 - ensuring that the planned training provides staff with the skills and subject knowledge to teach writing effectively.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that the leadership strategies which have been so effective in improving mathematics are shared, so that they accelerate improvements in writing and foundation subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- In the short time that the executive headteacher has been in post, she has galvanised the staff and pupils. As a result, the ethos of the school is overwhelmingly positive. The drive and determination to improve is palpable. Staff are hardworking, highly professional and passionate about the school. They welcome all feedback, regarding it as an opportunity to learn and become even better.
- Parents are almost unanimous in their praise for the school. They said that the executive headteacher has made a huge difference to the culture so that it is now open and welcoming. Parents feel that the school works well with them to help them support their children. They said that considerable care is provided for pupils who are in need, including counselling, and that their children are supported to reach their potential.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of the school. The whole-school action plan has clear priorities and success criteria. Systems for monitoring the impact of actions, including work scrutiny and lesson observations, are robust. As a result, there have been significant improvements since the previous inspection. Teaching and achievement in mathematics, for example, which were previously identified as an area for development, are now a strength.
- Teachers have received training on how to assess pupils' work accurately and, as a result, their knowledge of how well pupils are achieving is increasingly secure. New systems have been introduced, including class action plans and trackers, which enable gaps in individual pupils' skills and knowledge to be identified and targeted. Where these are being used well, they are a powerful tool for accelerating progress, but currently some teachers are using them more effectively than others are.
- Teachers now have precise and challenging targets for what they need to do to improve their teaching. These targets are closely linked to their impact on pupil progress, and are well supported by training to ensure that teachers have the skills to be successful. Staff are very complimentary about the support they receive.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is accelerating. This is because there is now a clear action plan in place to identify how pupil premium funding will be spent, and its impact is monitored regularly. Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well targeted to ensure that they make progress. Systems for identifying pupils who have SEN are robust. The gaps in their knowledge are identified and targeted, and as pupils make progress their targets are swiftly amended to increase the challenge. Teaching assistants have been well trained to deliver a range of additional support, and the school works closely with outside agencies where necessary.
- As a result of historical difficulties in leadership and the areas for development from the last inspection, leaders have prioritised improvements in mathematics, with considerable success. They have now identified that writing and foundation subjects are the next areas for development. Very recent changes have been made to the way that writing is being taught, but teachers have not yet been fully trained in its delivery, and it is too soon, therefore, to see impact. Further training has been prioritised for

next term.

- The curriculum is broad and underpinned by 'experience days', which include trips out or visitors into school. It is delivered in such a way as to ensure that the vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about learning and talk very positively about what is available to them. Currently, the mathematics curriculum is more effective than the writing curriculum because it is clearly structured to ensure that pupils understand and master essential concepts. Many opportunities are provided for reading. The curriculum is enhanced by sports and other clubs. All of this makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The sports premium is spent wisely. It is used to provide specialist teaching in physical education, training for class teachers and additional clubs and opportunities for sports at lunchtime.

Governance of the school

- Governors were shocked by the outcome of the last inspection and have since been determined to ensure that they have a more accurate view of the school. They have had a review of governance and have been swift to respond to the areas for development.
- Governors have taken steps to ensure that they collect evidence about how well the school is performing from a range of sources rather than relying on the headteacher. They now have protocols in place for them to make regular visits to school. As well as having link governors for key aspects of the school's work, such as safeguarding, each governor is attached to a class. They also seek information at governors' meetings from middle leaders about the progress of the work in their curriculum areas.
- Governors have requested, and receive, very comprehensive reports from the executive headteacher prior to each governors' meeting. They have had training on data so that they can understand the information provided about how well pupils are progressing. Minutes from governors' meetings show that they use this information to ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account.
- Governors speak knowledgably about the work of the school. Until recently, performance management systems have not been robust enough for them to hold teachers to account. Now they know that targets are challenging.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors visit the school regularly and have commissioned a recent safeguarding review to ensure that pupils are being taught about safeguarding as part of the curriculum.
- All staff are up to date with safeguarding training, child protection training and 'Prevent' duty training.
- Systems are in place to ensure that pupils are safe online and are taught about maintaining e-safety at home, as part of the curriculum.
- Recruitment processes are robust and all appropriate checks are carried out on

appointment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time is inconsistent across school. The quality of teaching of writing is not as good as the teaching of mathematics. Teaching of writing is not good enough to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in their writing across the school.
- A new approach to the teaching of writing has very recently been introduced into the school. As yet, teachers do not all have the skills to implement this effectively.
- Over time, teachers have not all used their knowledge of how well pupils are learning to inform their planning. In some cases, work in writing books shows that pupils are repeating tasks even when they have previously shown that they can do them successfully. In others, most-able pupils have had to sit through the same teacher input as the rest of the class even though they have not needed it and could have moved straight on to a more challenging activity.
- When planning for the teaching of writing, teachers do not always consider the context and purpose for writing. Pupils are encouraged to manipulate sentences, but they do not always know why.
- Teachers do not correct basic errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation consistently across the school. There is considerable focus on the use of language features in writing, such as adjectives and adverbs, as well as on extending pupils' vocabulary. However, teachers do not spend sufficient time ensuring that pupils use these correctly. Sometimes, pupils are given credit for using language devices even if they are not appropriate. In some cases, teachers' weak subject knowledge contributes to this, as they are not always able to provide good models for writing.
- In foundation subjects, such as history and science, teachers provide activities which engage pupils in their learning. However, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. Teachers tend to focus on the acquisition of pupils' knowledge, rather than on developing the higher-level skills such as evaluation. In science for example, investigations are limited by the use of worksheets which do not allow for challenge of the most able.
- There was evidence seen of highly effective and challenging questioning to enable pupils to access reading texts. One teacher in particular was very skilled at asking probing questions to enable pupils to understand what they were reading.
- The teaching of mathematics is good across the school. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge and are able to use this to expose and address pupils' misunderstanding. Teachers are tenacious in challenging pupils to use accurate mathematical language and to explain how they have arrived at conclusions.
- Teachers use their knowledge of how well pupils are learning in mathematics to set work which challenges pupils of all abilities. They ensure that pupils have ample opportunity to reason and apply their mathematical skills to solving problems. They question pupils closely throughout lessons to check for understanding. Teachers provide immediate feedback to pupils about how well pupils are doing so that they are moved on rapidly throughout lessons. Pupils enjoy their mathematics and relish the challenge. Work in books shows that they make good progress over time as a result.

- Throughout the school, excellent relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils want to learn and are confident to try new things and make mistakes. Teaching assistants are effective in ensuring that those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are equally confident and well supported.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school because they are very confident that teachers will look after them and listen to them if they have a problem. They also said that they are taught how to keep themselves safe. The school curriculum provides them with age-appropriate information on a range of subjects, including 'stranger danger', road safety, internet safety and mobile phone use.
- Pupils are confident that there is very little bullying in the school. They understand the different forms that bullying can take and understand the difference between bullying and 'falling out'. They said that if there are any issues in relation to bullying, teachers sort them out quickly.
- Feedback from parents indicates that they are very positive that their children are safe and well looked after. Parents have no concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils understand the school's values well. One pupil said, 'Respect all is an important value in our school,' and they said that no one would be teased because they are different. One pupil said that she had joined the school outside the usual time and that she had been welcomed and supported to settle in. Pupils talked confidently about compassion, perseverance, trust, friendship, hope and never giving up. Many understand British values and can talk, for example, about democracy. Some have been following the news and are aware of some key national issues such as Brexit.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to contribute to the school community. There is an active school council and each class has 'buddies' to help anyone who is lonely or sad in the playground.
- There is a very strong sense that pupils are very proud of their school, value the support that their teachers give them and want to do well. They said that 'education is fun' and 'learning is challenging'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are extremely polite, helpful, friendly and inquisitive. Inspectors were approached frequently during the inspection by pupils asking if they needed help or wanted to know anything about the school, or by pupils who simply wanted to talk about the important things that go on in their school.
- Behaviour in classrooms is sometimes exemplary. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. The majority take pride in their work and present it as carefully as they can. They are enthusiastic learners and very keen to ask and answer questions and to get

involved in their learning. They understand about resilience and respond well to challenge, and the majority stay focused on their work even when they find it difficult.

- Behaviour around school is good. Pupils understand and follow the school rules, so that the community is orderly and harmonious.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils. Adults speak to pupils with respect and they provide positive role models for good behaviour. Clear behaviour management systems ensure that the rare incidents of misbehaviour can be dealt with swiftly.
- Attendance is average. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school regularly and are keen to attend because they enjoy it. The school has effective systems for supporting the few pupils who occasionally have difficulties getting to school. No group of pupils is disadvantaged by low attendance.
- Very occasionally, when work set does not meet their needs, some pupils become fidgety and off task.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Inspectors are in agreement with senior leaders' self-evaluation that outcomes require improvement.
- In 2017, outcomes improved at the end of Year 2, so that the proportion of pupils that reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils that reached the expected standard in mathematics and reading was slightly above average, but the proportion that reached the expected standard in writing remained low. Too few pupils exceeded the expected standard in any subject.
- In 2017, although progress in mathematics and reading was broadly average, progress in writing was very slow. There was a big difference in the achievement of girls and that of boys, with girls making much slower progress.
- The school's internal tracking data shows that, for current pupils, progress is accelerating across the school in reading and mathematics. This was confirmed by inspectors' discussions with pupils about their work and by the progress evident in pupils' books over time. By Year 6, pupils read fluently, with confidence and obvious enjoyment. The majority also have a secure understanding of key mathematical concepts and are able to use their skills to reason and to solve problems.
- However, pupils' progress in writing is slower. Pupils' vocabulary is increasing, but they are not all able to use new words in the correct context. They understand that sentences are made up of different parts, such as verbs and adverbs, but some struggle to use their knowledge of language to communicate clearly, for a range of audiences. Although there was evidence of beautiful handwriting in some classes, not all pupils are encouraged to write legibly. The most able do not consistently make the progress that they should because work is not always challenging enough for them.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is accelerating, because new tracking systems are effective in identifying gaps in their knowledge.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in early years make good progress over time. This is because adults assess them regularly by undertaking detailed observations of what they can do. Progress can be clearly seen in their learning journals.
- Children enjoy a wide range of well-planned activities, supported by adults who have a good understanding of how young children learn. The children cooperate well and are challenged through story, song, construction, sand and water in an engaging curriculum. Effective questioning extends their thinking and gives them the confidence to express their ideas.
- Outdoor provision is rich and varied. Even on a very cold day, children were encouraged to use the outdoor space to investigate the properties of ice.
- There are good systems in place to promote independence. At the beginning of the day, children are expected to self-register, write their own name and choose the snack they will want to eat later. Teachers use information about how well children are learning to rearrange groupings as needed during the course of the day. Children therefore benefit from key-worker groups, whole-class groups, personalised phonics groups and guided-teaching groups. All of these enable their needs to be securely met.
- Early years is well led. The leader can access information quickly about how well pupils are doing. She is able to analyse what it is telling her to ensure that pupils are targeted to make good progress. A 'target tree' is available so that all staff know how to help children meet their next steps in Nursery. There are high expectations throughout, and professional development has ensured that the leader has an effective team.
- Systems are in place to identify how well children are achieving against their learning goals. However, it is not yet fully effective in identifying next steps and further challenge for children, particularly in writing.

School details

Unique reference number	104787
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	10042428

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Cooke
Executive Headteacher	Dianne Holcroft
Telephone number	01744 678720
Website	www.wargraveprimary.org.uk
Email address	wargrave@sthelens.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White_British backgrounds and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The substantive headteacher left the school in January 2016. From that point, the school was supported by an interim executive headteacher. Since September, a new

executive headteacher has been in post. A substantive deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed from within the school, and will take up post formally in January 2018. Governors intend to recruit a permanent headteacher.

- There is an on-site breakfast club and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of lessons in each class. Four of those lessons were observed jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a wide sample of work in pupils' books.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the leaders' records of monitoring, tracking of pupil progress, class action plans, whole-school action plans, safeguarding documentation and training records.
- Inspectors talked to pupils informally in lessons and at playtime, and held a formal meeting with pupil representatives from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Fifty-three responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire were taken into consideration, as well as 83 text responses sent in by parents. In addition, inspectors talked to parents informally as they were bringing pupils into school.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, governors and representatives from the local authority.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Gill	Ofsted Inspector

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