

# Ditton Primary School

Liverpool Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 7HD

**Inspection dates** 11–12 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is rising rapidly. They make good progress, often from low starting points, and they reach nationally expected standards by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- Consistently good teaching across the school is enabling pupils to do increasingly well in every year group.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education and helps them develop positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils behave well and they are proud of their school and their achievements. They feel safe, happy and secure in school, ready to learn and to make progress. Parents express great confidence in the care the school provides for their children.
- The headteacher is driving the school forward at a rapid pace. Effective governors and able senior and middle leaders are providing strong support to improve teaching further and to raise pupils' achievement. Staff morale is high and everyone shares the headteacher's high ambitions for the pupils and the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Leaders make regular checks on teaching, providing very good guidance for staff; this has helped to raise the overall quality of teaching from satisfactory to good.
- Regular, careful checks on pupils' progress ensure that pupils are given levels of support or challenge that are matched to their needs.
- Across the classes, a small but increasing number of pupils are working at above average levels for their age.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to accelerate pupils' progress even more and to take the school to the next level.
- Although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is rising, it is still below average.
- The otherwise well-crafted school development plan does not set out the school's targets for improving pupils' achievement with sufficient clarity and precision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons; two of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- The inspectors met with three members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders, with a group of pupils and with two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the school's most recent survey of parents' views and of the views expressed by parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors took into account the views that staff expressed in the inspection questionnaires they returned.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the written work in pupils' books and also reviewed a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school development plan, records of pupils' attainment and progress and documents related to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila O'Keefe	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British, with a small proportion from a range of other heritages and backgrounds. Currently, nearly all of the pupils in school speak English as their home language and there are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is considerably above average. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012. A new deputy headteacher and a new assistant headteacher were appointed in 2013.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to ensure that the rising trend in pupils' achievement is sustained, by continuing to keep rigorous checks on teaching and by continuing to share the most effective practice.
- Sustain the rising trend in the proportion of pupils who are working above the levels that are usually expected for their age, by continuing to keep regular checks on their progress, to make sure that all of the school's most able pupils are given the support and challenge they need to enable them to reach the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that the school's ambitious targets for improving pupils' achievement are set out more precisely in the school's development plan and that they include intended improvements that are easier to measure.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children's skills are considerably below the usual expectations for their age when they join the Reception class. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that, by the end of the year, a large majority are much closer to the expected levels for their age in all of the areas of learning. They develop positive attitudes to their work, which they take with them as they move up through the school.
- Over the last two years, achievement has risen across the school in response to stronger leadership and improved teaching.
- Low standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 were mainly the result of weaker teaching in the past. Nonetheless, the school's records show that pupils in Year 2 in 2013 made good progress from their starting points in that year and that they are continuing to do well in Year 3.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in the current year and are on track to reach nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Overall attainment in Key Stage 2 is broadly average, but is rising quickly. Improvements were evident during the last school year and school data and inspection findings show that attainment is continuing to rise across the Key Stage 2 classes and subjects in the current year.
- Pupils are making good progress because teachers have closed gaps in their learning successfully and the expectations of pupils' progress have risen. In 2013, the majority of pupils in Year 6 made at least the expected rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics and the proportion who made more than expected progress matched the picture for Year 6 pupils across the country. Evidence in lessons, in pupils' books and in the school's progress records show that this good rate of progress is being sustained across the school this year.
- Across the classes in the current year, a growing number of pupils are operating above the expected levels for their age. This is the result of improved teaching, but the school knows there is more to do to ensure that all of its most-able pupils do as well as they possibly can. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 was greater than in the previous year in all three subjects, but was still below average.
- Standards in reading are rising quickly. Letters and sounds are taught successfully and a large majority of pupils met the required standard in the Year 1 screening assessment for reading. Currently, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, most read at the expected standard for their age and are able to apply their skills well in research activities. Pupils of all ages show a genuine interest in books and an enjoyment of reading.
- The attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, was about two terms below that of the other pupils in their year group in Year 6 in 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is tackling these issues decisively. Across the classes in the current year, gaps between the attainment of this group of pupils and the other pupils in school are closing rapidly in all three subject areas, because they are all making good progress. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for every pupil.
- Further evidence of this is seen in the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs, all of whom often make rapid gains, as a result of the effective support they receive.
- The very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils who join the school at random points during the key stages are helped to settle in quickly. A considerable proportion of the new arrivals have additional learning needs, sometimes resulting from disruption in their education, but the school ensures that they make good progress from their starting points.

**The quality of teaching****is good**

- Teaching was judged to be satisfactory at the school's last inspection. It is now good overall and outstanding in Year 6. This is resulting in on-going improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Activities in lessons usually provide just the right levels of difficulty which are appropriate for pupils' differing learning needs and abilities. Lessons move along briskly so that pupils' interest is fully maintained all the time. Teachers give clear explanations of what pupils are expected to do and to learn, so that they understand the purpose of their activities. All of these consistently good features in teaching contribute well to pupils' good progress.
- A lively curriculum and good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enable children to make a good start in their early learning.
- Most teaching is good, rather than outstanding. The factors that currently prevent teaching being judged outstanding vary from lesson to lesson. For example, some lessons do not sufficiently stretch the most able pupils so that, although their progress is good, it could be even better. In other lessons, pupils do not always have enough time to complete a task fully, and this, too, means that pupils do not achieve as well as they possibly could.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers show thorough subject knowledge and use questioning very skilfully to discover how much pupils have understood, so that they can spot and tackle any uncertainties. In a lesson on linear measurement in Year 6, for example, the class teacher picked up on an error made by pupils in work from the previous day; she gave the pupils a series of quick-fire challenges, continually checking on their responses, targeting her questions at individuals around the room. As a result, in the first few minutes of the lesson, she had helped them to iron out their confusions. They were ready and eager to move on to an even more challenging practical activity and able to work accurately, with improved understanding.
- Positive relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom contribute strongly to pupils' good learning and progress.
- Teachers and skilful teaching assistants work together well in providing extra support for those pupils who need it, including less-able pupils and those with special educational needs. This means that these pupils have the support they need to build their self-confidence and make good progress. The school uses a range of additional strategies, including small-group teaching and individual support in the classroom, for those who need extra help.
- The school has recently revised and improved teachers' marking methods to ensure that pupils are given the guidance they need to keep on improving their work. This is giving pupils an increasingly clear understanding of how well they are doing and what the next steps in their learning should be.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well around the school and they are friendly and polite. Pupils are cooperative in lessons and apply themselves well to their work. Their books show that they try hard to present their work neatly. They listen attentively to instructions in lessons. Pupils are learning to listen to each other's ideas in discussions and to work successfully with a partner or a group in class. These positive attitudes are developing well and are helping pupils to benefit increasingly from the good teaching.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that the staff look after them well. The responses to Parent View and to the school's own recent survey reflect parents' very positive views of the care the school provides.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They say that bullying incidents are very rare and that staff always deal with such issues very quickly and nip them in the bud.
- Pupils enjoy a good range of opportunities to contribute to making the school a happy place for everyone, for example, when acting as play leaders or as influential school councillors.
- Pupils with additional learning, health, social, emotional or medical needs are included in everything on offer and are supported very well. The school provides sensitive and caring support for pupils and families whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and for pupils

who are newly arrived in the school. Staff work productively with a range of agencies to ensure that support is targeted appropriately.

- Attendance has continued to improve since the school's last inspection and is above average in the current year, reflecting the school's strong partnership with the families it serves.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has reinvigorated the school. He has set a clear agenda for on-going improvement, with a razor-sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Parents' confidence in the school has been restored and the number of pupils on roll, which had started to dip in previous years, is now rising rapidly.
- The deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the middle leaders all make strong contributions to the school's development and lead by example.
- Systems for checking on pupils' progress have been fully revised and are now extremely thorough. This gives staff clear and regular information about how well every pupil is doing, enabling the school to identify and support anyone who may be underachieving. So far, this has had the strongest impact on helping pupils of lower or average ability to make improved rates of progress. Work is under way to ensure that all of the most able pupils are identified at an early stage so that the school can be sure they are given the support they need to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Regular checks are made on the quality and effect of teaching. Senior staff and middle leaders assist in this and all staff work together well and share the best practice. All this is supported by a programme of training for all staff, including teaching assistants, which is helping to keep staff skills sharp and up to date. This good leadership practice has moved the overall quality of teaching up to good; leaders recognise that it now needs further implementation to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in the school.
- The school development plan identifies well-chosen actions to enable pupils' achievement to continue to improve. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils, but the plan is not explicit enough about the amount of progress the school is aiming for pupils to make. This makes it difficult to measure accurately the success of improvement actions.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Subjects are brought together into topics that capture pupils' interest very well. It is further enriched by contributions from visiting specialists and by many visits to places of interest, including residential trips.
- The school uses its primary school sports funding effectively to provide specialist coaching and tuition; this also provides ongoing training for school staff. Pupils of all ages enjoy good quality sport and physical education activities in lessons and in after-school activities.
- The school values the regular advisory and consultant support provided by the local authority, which has helped it to continue to improve, particularly in developing the curriculum and preparing for the new 2014 curriculum.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have made astute appointments to leadership and staff posts over the period since the last inspection; this has helped to ensure effective leadership and good quality teaching.
  - Regular reviews of the school's and national data about pupils' progress give governors a clear overview of pupils' performance and of the quality and effect of teaching. This means that they are well informed and increasingly able to hold the school to account. They ensure that performance management systems are thorough and that leaders and staff are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and school priorities. Governors are fully aware of the link between the achievement of these targets and salary progression.
  - Governors are effective in making sure that safeguarding policy and procedures are fully in place. They are fully informed on how the pupil premium funding is spent and the difference it is making to this group of pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111183
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	430964

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Valerie Cordy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Buckley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 424 5861
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