

# Culcheth Primary School

Warrington Road, Culcheth, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 5HH

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school has improved continuously since the time of the last inspection.
- Children start school with skills below and sometimes well below those typical for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have made better progress than that typically found nationally and their achievement is good.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the normal times are helped to settle in exceptionally well because of the warm welcome provided by adults and pupils.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding and those from Irish Traveller backgrounds all receive very good support, so they all achieve well and do as well as their peers.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of how the school can continue to improve. She is very well supported by the governors and the assistant headteachers and has created a strong sense of teamwork between all who work in the school.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching to ensure that it is helping pupils to learn and progress well.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They feel safe. Their behaviour in class and around school is excellent. Adults and pupils treat each other with great respect.
- Other adults in the classroom support pupils sensitively and skilfully. This helps all pupils, including those with additional needs, to get the most out of lessons.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is good but not yet outstanding.
- Standards are better in reading and mathematics because sometimes the more-able pupils are not fully challenged when writing.
- Governors are supportive and hold leaders to account well for pupils' overall performance, but they do not receive enough information about how well different groups of pupils are doing.

# Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons and made a number of short visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning. One of these was a joint observation with the headteacher. They listened to readers in Years 1, 2 and 6 and observed the teaching of early reading skills in the school. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with a group of parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair, a representative of the local authority and members of staff.
- In the course of the inspection, inspectors took account of 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent, the school's analysis of questionnaires completed by parents and 23 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, long-term plan and the school's analysis of current data.

# Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elaine Maloney	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, although numbers have risen since the time of the previous inspection. The Reception class was oversubscribed this year and many year groups are now full.
- Most pupils are White British with an increasing proportion from other backgrounds including pupils whose families are Travellers of Irish heritage. A tiny proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- High proportions of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is similar to most schools. The number of pupils who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staff. A number of new staff, including the current headteacher, have been appointed and the senior leadership team has been restructured to include three assistant headteachers.
- Many changes, including a new Chair of the Governing Body, have taken place in the governing body since the last inspection. Six new members joined during the last school year.
- The school holds its fourth Eco Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The borough council has identified the school as a Music Ambassador because of the support provided for music education in the local area.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so that all pupils achieve as well as possible, particularly in writing, by making sure that:
  - there is sufficient challenge in writing tasks for pupils, especially the more able
  - pupils are encouraged to extend the range and quality of their writing, by producing longer pieces of work than they do at present
  - there is time in lessons for pupils to consider and act on the advice given in teachers' marking so that they can improve their work
  - in lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to check their work and decide how it can be improved before it is marked.
- Provide governors with summaries of how well all groups of pupils are doing, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, so that governors are better informed and can keep a check on progress each term.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Whatever their starting points, all pupils make good progress. Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because of the interesting activities provided and the skilful and caring staff who make learning fun and meaningful.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 is close to the national average. Pupils in this key stage make good progress overall, however, too few achieve higher than expected levels in writing.
- Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. Attainment in reading and mathematics is strongest because, as in Key Stage 1, fewer pupils gain the higher levels in writing. The vast majority of pupils make at least the progress expected of them and many do better than this, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who join the school later in the year make good progress from their various starting points. Teachers quickly check their levels of attainment when they first arrive, and provide any extra help they may need to catch up with their classmates. The gap between these pupils and those who have been in the school since the Reception class closes as they move up through the school.
- Parents of disabled pupils or have special educational needs are extremely happy with the support and care that their children receive. Early checks by staff to find out what these pupils' needs are and the good support they receive help them make the similar good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who are supported by additional funding, such as the pupil premium make good progress. This is because the money has been spent on learning programmes that are designed to meet their specific needs and additional staffing also provides individual and small group teaching for these pupils. Their progress is checked often to make sure that the extra help they receive is moving their learning forward quickly. This applies equally to pupils from Irish Traveller backgrounds who also make good progress.
- All pupils enjoy reading. Leaders ensure that all pupils read regularly in school. Year 6 pupils enjoy the time they spend reading with younger children. The school values members of the local community, including members of the governing body, who visit the school on a regular basis to read with pupils. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, reading standards are broadly average.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Leaders' firm focus on continuing to improve the quality of teaching is proving successful. Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection; however, most lesson observations and work in pupils' books show that the quality of teaching is typically good.
- The most effective teaching has many common features including:
  - careful planning which helps learning move at a brisk pace
  - tasks which take good account of what pupils already know and can do
  - skilful questioning by teachers and assistants used to check how well pupils are doing
  - clear explanations by teachers that improve pupils' understanding and knowledge.
- Marking is generally good and some is exceptional. It directs pupils to what they need to do to improve their work. However, not all teachers give pupils enough time to act on the guidance provided to make improvements to their work. In some lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunity to check their writing to see how well they are doing and make the changes required to improve the standard of their work before it is marked.
- Teachers' expectations are generally high. However, sometimes the work provided for the more-able pupils is not challenging enough to enable them to reach the standards they are capable of

in writing.

- Most pupils say they enjoy writing, particularly when this is linked to topic work. Leaders are making changes to the way the curriculum is planned to make sure that pupils have the opportunity to write at length more regularly.
- Teaching assistants are well-briefed and form a strong team with teachers to provide support in class for all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, in a sensitive and unobtrusive way. Adults encourage pupils of all ages to become self-reliant and independent so that they do not rely on adult help too much.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is outstanding. This is particularly the case in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 where lessons are very active and teaching is imaginative; all pupils are fully involved and make rapid progress. In one lesson, pupils took part in a pebble hunt around the school. This sparked the interest of pupils and they eagerly read the letters they found to each other during their hunt.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils are happy, welcoming and very well-mannered. They are extremely proud of their school community.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection because of the proactive approach by leaders. Pupils show a lot of consideration for others and behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent.
- The school has outstanding systems for checking on and responding to unacceptable behaviour. The few pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are helped to do this very effectively by the adults. The behaviour policy meets the differing needs of pupils, is understood by all and is consistently applied by staff.
- As a result of work in lessons and in assemblies, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. They know about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and instances of bullying of any type are rare. They place great trust in the adults to take very good care of them. Parents, too, think that the school nurtures and cares for their children extremely well.
- The concerted efforts of leaders, staff and parents have led to much improved attendance which is now above that in most schools.

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

- The sustained improvement since the last inspection reflects the ambition and drive of the headteacher. Her clear view of how successful the school can be is shared by governors and staff. She has created an effective leadership team that is fully involved in the process of driving forward improvements in the school. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and know exactly what steps to take to continue to move the school forward.
- The school's motto 'Learning is Fun' sums up the school's approach to the curriculum. Leaders and staff foster pupils' love for learning by planning exciting and memorable activities which inspire and motivate them to work hard and strive to succeed. A wide range of events and special days enhance learning and provide regular opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning. School trips, including residential visits and out-of-hours clubs are popular and well attended.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted outstandingly well. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example, as members of the school council. Eco-councillors also work hard and the school allotment and pupils' interest in improving the environment are a credit to them.
- Teachers' performance is regularly checked against how much progress the pupils they teach

make and how well they carry out their different roles in the school.

- School leaders have a very clear picture of the performance of all pupils, and groups of pupils in the school. They take careful note of the achievement of pupils who are new to the school, as well as those who have attended the school since joining the Reception class to ensure that any gaps in the performance of pupils are closed as quickly as possible.
- Parents hold overwhelmingly positive views of the school. In particular, parents of pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk say that the school 'goes the extra mile' to provide help and support pupils and families sometimes in need. A number of pupils travel to the school from some distance as the reputation for the inclusive nature of the school and the care they provide is highly valued.
- Very good partnerships with other agencies and services contribute well to pupils' achievement.
- This good school receives appropriate 'light touch' support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Effective arrangements are in place to support and train the members of the governing body who recently took up their new role. Governors provide good support and challenge for the school and are determined that the school continues to improve. The governing body monitors the effectiveness of the headteacher, ensuring that her performance objectives are challenging and focused on improving the performance of all pupils and staff. Governors are well informed about the attainment and progress of all year groups on a termly basis. They understand how the pupil premium is spent and but do not yet receive enough information about the performance of groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium, to judge the full impact of this funding on pupils' outcomes. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

## 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	111180
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	403140

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss R Harrison
Headteacher	Miss A Smith
Date of previous school inspection	5- February 2008
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