

Sandbrook Primary School

Stavordale Road, Moreton, Wirral, CH46 9PS

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Too few pupils make more than expected progress from their starting points or reach the higher levels, especially in reading and writing, by the end of Year 6. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 have been below average in recent years and few pupils reach the higher levels.
- Pupils' skills in making sense of letters and sounds that form words are underdeveloped in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching requires improvement. The quality is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils in all year groups are able to make good progress.
- Work provided by teachers does not always offer appropriate pace or challenge to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always show pupils how their work can be improved.
- Individual pupil's targets are not used well enough to help pupils improve their work.
- Senior and subject leaders do not yet have the skills to check on and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, they are not able to effectively support the headteacher in her drive to quicken the pace of the school's improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has high expectations, a clear view of what constitutes good teaching and an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school is improving. For example, teaching is getting better; most teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good.
- The attainment of most pupils currently in the school is now broadly in line with expectations for their age and more pupils are making faster progress than they have previously.
- Pupils enjoy school. They attend regularly and say they feel safe and cared for well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons or parts of lessons including three joint observations with the headteacher. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work, listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with five governors. They spoke to two representatives of the local authority and met with members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the school's own questionnaires to parents and the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to staff questionnaires completed during the inspection were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, records of pupils' current standards and progress, the school improvement plan and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kevin Boyle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium funding is above the national average. This additional funding is provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection including several periods of absence experienced by members of the leadership team. In addition, the deputy headteacher resigned his post to take up a position in another school at the end of the summer term 2013. The post of deputy headteacher is currently vacant.
- The governing body provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The headteacher offers support to the local cluster of schools at the request of the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order to further raise standards and increase the rate of progress made by pupils by:
 - developing the skills of teachers and teaching assistants so that there is a systematic and well-organised approach to the teaching of early reading skills
 - ensuring that teachers plan work which is closely matched to individual skills and abilities and offers appropriate pace and challenge to all pupils and especially the most able
 - ensuring that teachers' marking, particularly in writing, matches the best practice that exists in the school and that pupils know their individual targets and have regular opportunities to use these to improve their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that key leaders have the skills to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress so that they can then use this information to take a more active role in driving school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because from their starting points, the large majority of pupils generally make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but too few pupils consistently do better than this, particularly in reading and writing.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been below average overall in recent years and although more pupils are now beginning to reach the higher levels, there are still too few doing so consistently in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, however, standards in writing are not as strong and too few pupils reach the higher levels in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress they are capable of because the work they are given is not always sufficiently demanding.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in learning about letters and the sounds they make (phonics) but opportunities to build fully on this learning in Years 1 and 2 are sometimes missed and progress is less consistent at times. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read a variety of texts with fluency and understanding.
- Children typically join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels below those expected for their age and a significant minority are at an early stage of developing speech and language and self-help skills. They settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes and quickly become happy, interested learners. Good progress is usually made throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, however, some disruption to teaching in 2013 meant that progress was slower in the Reception class and fewer children than expected entered Year 1 working in line with age-related expectations.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers in the school given their starting points and abilities.
- The pupil premium funding is helping to close the gaps between pupils eligible for this funding and others in the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding was in line their peers. Key Stage 2 pupils eligible for this funding also attained broadly similar standards as their peers in reading and writing. They were around a term behind in mathematics but the gap was narrower than that in 2012.
- School data and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are treated equally. It shows that the majority of current pupils are now working at least at the level expected for their age and more are attaining the higher levels. In all year groups, faster progress is being made and older pupils, in particular, are helped to overcome any underachievement experienced lower down the school, because teaching is improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- School records, evidence from observations, some undertaken jointly by the headteacher and inspectors, and pupils' work indicate that the quality of teaching requires improvement.
- Although the large majority of teaching observed by inspectors was good, too little is yet outstanding and some, particularly in Key Stage 1, still requires improvement. Consequently, pupils are not yet making consistently good progress. Nevertheless, as a result of well-focused staff development, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- In less effective lessons, teachers sometimes talk too much so that the pace of learning drops and the level of challenge is not always high enough to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, activities do not always challenge the thinking of the most able pupils.

- Although pupils make adequate progress in developing early reading and writing skills overall, their progress varies. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 does not consistently build on the good start pupils make in the Early Years Foundation Stage when learning about letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The pace of teaching in lessons is not fast enough to move learning along quickly and classrooms are too noisy to allow adults to check that pupils are using the correct sounds and to address misconceptions as soon as possible.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and positive comments are provided by teachers. However, although there are instances of best practice within the school, for example, that seen in the books of the Year 5/6 literacy group, teachers' marking, particularly in writing, does not always give pupils the precise guidance they need to improve their work.
- The use of pupils' individual targets is not yet used consistently in all classes to help pupils know how to improve their work.
- Where teaching is strongest, lessons are well planned and move a long at a good pace. Teachers provide activities which are well matched to pupils' needs and ensure that a good level of challenge is provided for all pupils including those capable of reaching the higher levels. In these instances pupils make good progress.
- Warm relationships are a typical feature of all lessons.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress, as a result of the very effective use of checks on children's progress in order to plan the next steps in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to involve children in conversation and are skilful in enabling them to learn through play. During the inspection, children enjoyed using their imagination to create a fire station in the Reception classroom. Their play in this area, as well as being enjoyed by all, offered excellent opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills and also promoted well children's understanding of how to keep safe. It was bonfire night and they were very clear about the need keep a safe distance from fireworks.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. This helps them to participate fully in lessons and make the progress expected of them given their starting points and abilities.
- The attractive library is a popular resource in the school and promotes a love for reading very effectively. Older pupils in particular read widely and often and enjoy the books linked to their topics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of most pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and around school is good. Pupils take a great pride in their school. They are kind, considerate and courteous to each other and to adults in the school.
- They feel safe and value the relationships they have with their teachers, the other adults in the school and each other. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and all are clear about the school rewards system. They understand the different sorts of bullying and say that instances are rare. If incidents do occur, they trust the adults to sort these out quickly and fairly.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their learning, talk enthusiastically about their lessons and are keen to do well. They enjoy working together in pairs and in small groups and do this sensibly, making sure they listen carefully to each other.
- On the occasions when pupils lose concentration or become restless, it is usually because the pace of learning is not quick enough or the level of challenge in lessons is not high enough to meet their needs and so fully retain their attention.
- A few pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are supported effectively by the adults to achieve this, and as a result little learning time is lost.
- Pupils understand the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle and enjoy the regular opportunities provided for them to take part in sports and other extra-curricular activities, provided through the school budget and additional Primary School Sport funding.
- Pupils play an active role in the life of the school and feel that their contributions are valued. Members of the school council and eco-group contribute well to the decision-making process in

the school. Some pupils also have the opportunity to lead the learning of others. For example, a Year 5 pupil runs a popular lunchtime computer club for other pupils. Their current project is to build a website and all are keen to succeed and work together well.

- The need for good attendance has a high profile and attendance is broadly average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite staffing difficulties experienced since the last inspection, the headteacher has been successful in maintaining stability and has driven the ongoing development of the skills of other leaders, including the governing body. This work is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements and demonstrates that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. However, too much still rests on the shoulders of the headteacher and leadership and management at the present time requires improvement.
- The regular checks made on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching carried out by the headteacher are rigorous and robust. The results are reported to governors and are used to quickly to identify any pupils at risk of underachieving, to secure appropriate training for staff and to support decisions about any advancement in pay.
- Senior and subject leaders are becoming more skilful at reviewing aspects of the school's work. However, these skills need further development, for example, when identifying what needs to be improved in lessons, to enable all leaders to contribute fully to the ongoing drive to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching further.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and the school's strategic plan is well focused on the correct priorities for improvement.
- The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and brings subjects together into interesting and increasingly creative topics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils say how much they enjoy their lessons. Visits, including residential trips, visitors and well-attended after-school clubs all add rich experiences for pupils. Staff plan regular opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy, numeracy and communications skills in their topic work. The breakfast-club provides a good start to the day.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum meets children's needs extremely well. It is very well planned and frequently adapted as a result of ongoing observations of children's progress and interests and extends children's learning well through imaginative play.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors and the school's own questionnaires indicate that they hold positive views of the school and appreciate the care provided for their children.
- Well-targeted training, including the development of senior and subject leaders, and support are provided for the school by the local authority. The local authority uses the expertise of the headteacher as a statutory assessment moderator for Key Stage 2 writing within a local school cluster.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have continued to develop their skills since the previous inspection and have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and are clear about what it needs to do to improve further. They are well informed, gain first-hand experience of school life and participate regularly in various forms of training. The governing body checks how pupil premium funding is spent and makes sure it is making a difference to those pupils who are eligible. Money from the new Primary School Sports funding, which is provided to enable pupils to become more active and follow healthy lifestyles, has been allocated appropriately. Governors are aware of the performance of teaching staff. They have full confidence in the headteacher and monitor her performance carefully. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 105003 |
| Local authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 426074 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 171 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Vida Wilson |
| Headteacher | Claire Temple |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 January 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0151 677 3231 |
| Fax number | 0151 678 5478 |
| Email address | schooloffice@sandbrook.wirral.sch.uk |

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