

Leftwich Community Primary School

Old Hall Road, Leftwich, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 8DH

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The actions of leaders and governors have not secured consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across key stages and for all groups of pupils. Instability in staffing has added to the school's difficulties.
- In 2018, standards in key stage 1 declined sharply in all subjects and were in the lowest 10% of all schools nationally.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Teaching in some classes and groups does not match the needs of pupils. It does not sufficiently stretch the most able or offer enough support for the least able.
- Governors are committed to supporting leaders and staff. Many are new to the governing board and their effectiveness in holding leaders accountable for pupils' outcomes is not fully developed.
- Leaders have not used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to best effect. These pupils lag behind their peers in their attainment and attendance.
- Attendance is below the national average and too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Actions taken recently to bring about improvements are not fully embedded.
- Pupils' behaviour has declined since the last inspection. A minority of pupils do not always show respect for their teachers or each other. Strategies to manage pupils with challenging behaviour are not having the desired effect, resulting in a high level of repeat exclusions.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The early years is good. Children make good progress from their starting points because of effective provision.
- Middle leaders are making a good contribution to the development of an effective curriculum.
- Leaders' actions are resulting in strengthening progress for key stage 2 pupils in reading and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by:
 - securing consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across key stages and subjects
 - using pupil premium funding more effectively to secure better progress for disadvantaged pupils, especially the most able disadvantaged
 - monitoring the impact of interventions and support on the progress of pupils with SEND to ensure its effectiveness
 - further developing the role of governors so that they hold leaders to account more promptly when they identify weaknesses in the school's performance.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities, providing sufficient challenge so that pupils make the progress they should, especially in writing
 - leaders and teachers have high expectations of what pupils, including boys and those who are disadvantaged, can achieve, so that more of them reach the higher standards.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing the incidents of poor behaviour and the higher-than-average level of exclusion by ensuring that the needs of pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour are met more effectively
 - continuing to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.

An external review of the pupil premium funding 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

- Leaders have not been able to sustain the good progress and outcomes for pupils since the previous inspection. Significant staffing changes from 2016 to 2018 contributed to a decline in standards in key stage 1. These pupils were not well prepared for the challenges of Year 3.
- Leaders have not evaluated the impact of the use of pupil premium effectively enough. Leaders use data to regularly check on how well disadvantaged pupils are doing. However, this is not helping to identify what is working well and where further improvements are needed. Disadvantaged pupils continue to make inconsistent progress across the school.
- Leaders have used funds to support pupils with SEND for their intended purpose with mixed results. They have not routinely evaluated the impact of spending on pupils' achievement, so they are not fully informed about what is working well and what could be improved.
- The headteachers were determined to tackle incidents of challenging and poor behaviour and took a firm approach with any pupil who was disrespectful or violent. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of exclusions in the last two years. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support individual pupils and their families. However, a minority of pupils are not learning from this approach and are repeatedly excluded. Staff rely heavily on leaders to tackle poor behaviour, and too few adults have received appropriate training recently.
- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport premium effectively, though the spending plan for this academic year was not on the website prior to the inspection. Pupils are encouraged to participate in sport regularly and benefit from increased opportunities to compete. As pupils move through school, their understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy develops well.
- The curriculum is currently undergoing significant change. The information that the school publishes online is incomplete. However, work in pupils' books and teachers' plans show that pupils are offered a stimulating curriculum that considers the needs and interests of Leftwich pupils. The curriculum is further enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, which pupils enjoy.
- Staff morale is high. The two headteachers have created a committed team of teachers who work hard and value the opportunities for continuing professional development.
- Middle leadership is improving rapidly and there is evident passion and commitment to continue to raise standards across the curriculum. The local authority has provided useful advice for leaders to develop and implement action plans for mathematics. External support has also helped to improve the leadership of reading and writing. These initiatives are having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make, especially in reading and mathematics in key stage 2.
- Subject leadership in other areas of the curriculum is also supporting pupils to make good progress. For example, in science, music and computing, leaders have a

comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of their subject. They support teachers with planning and assessment and monitor pupils' progress closely in these areas.

- Almost all parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Leaders' promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is strongly represented through a range of areas. Good links with a local church provide a valuable resource from which pupils learn about their role in the wider community.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a broad spectrum of different topics from which to learn. The curriculum teaches pupils to understand what is right and wrong, to get along with other people and to understand the similarities and differences of life across different cultures and religions. This helps to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- The school has recently experienced significant changes within the governing board. Governors have been supported by the local authority to overcome a series of challenges and bring about improvements. The current governing board has set about establishing procedures that will enable them to oversee the school effectively.
- Some governors are still learning about what their new role entails, so the impact of their work is not evident. However, governors make good use of external reports, including those from the local authority, to understand the school's strengths and what needs to improve.
- The school's website did not comply with statutory requirements at the start of the inspection. This included governor and curriculum information, the plan for the use of sports premium and the school's latest safeguarding policy. Most omissions were rectified by the end of the inspection.
- Governors visit regularly to find out what it feels like to be a pupil at Leftwich. They use their skills and expertise to support the school, which includes taking assemblies and accompanying school trips.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and parents confirmed this.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Through the curriculum and in assemblies, pupils have the opportunity to explore sensitive issues, including different types of bullying and how to prevent it.
- Governors and leaders have made sure that all arrangements for the care and protection of pupils are appropriate. Detailed and accurate records are kept, and any concern about a child is followed up quickly. Timely action is taken to support children and their families.
- Procedures for recruitment and vetting of staff are effective. The single central record is well managed and checked regularly by governors.

- The safeguarding policy on the school's website did not take account of the latest statutory guidance at the start of the inspection. The new policy was available and quickly uploaded to the website, but has not yet been approved by governors. Leaders have, however, kept staff up to date with specific safeguarding issues, including the 'Prevent' duty.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, teaching is not consistent enough over time and across the school to enable pupils who have low starting points to catch up and reach the standards expected of them.
- Circumstances outside of the school's control have led to several changes of teaching staff, with some posts filled on a temporary basis. Inevitably, this has caused some disruption to teaching, especially in key stage 1. Furthermore, assessment information was not always accurate and hampered teachers' understanding of what pupils could do and what support they needed when staff changed. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning.
- Teachers work hard to establish positive and secure relationships with pupils. As a result, the majority of pupils concentrate well and work hard. However, some pupils lose concentration and become distracted when work is not matched to their abilities. This is especially evident when pupils are withdrawn from class or when pupils finish their tasks quickly and are unclear about what to do next.
- Although improving, the teaching of writing is not consistently good in order to enable pupils to make the progress they should. On displays around the school, there are examples of well-presented and interesting writing. In some classes, pupils' writing has been inspired by the books they are reading and shows flair and imagination. However, books show that the quality of writing varies from one class to another. Some pupils struggle because handwriting and presentation skills are not secure. Work is unfinished and simple mistakes in spelling and punctuation are not routinely picked up. This results in pupils repeating the errors in English books and other work. The school has recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing, but this is not yet embedded throughout the school.
- When teaching is most effective, teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm keep pupils interested. For example, older pupils confidently tackled challenging problems in mathematics because they understood the steps needed to divide fractions by whole numbers. The teacher adjusted the level of challenge through careful questioning to develop pupils' understanding.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the learning of pupils in class. They provide appropriate support, particularly to pupils with SEND. They encourage pupils to do their best.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Younger pupils gain confidence to read unfamiliar words using their phonic knowledge. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils can read fluently. Although pupils are not always passionate about reading, they are encouraged to read often and can say which books they like and why.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils enjoy learning and the positive relationships that are nurtured in school. Pupils' mental health and well-being are important to staff, and pupils grow in confidence because adults treat them fairly and with respect.
- Pupils are safe in school and say that they feel safe. They receive good advice on road safety, fire safety and the dangers posed by drugs and alcohol. A well-planned computing curriculum includes teaching pupils how to stay safe online.
- Pupils have opportunities to learn about life beyond Leftwich Community Primary School through visits to places of interest and the celebration of special events such as Remembrance Sunday. Indeed, school staff regularly include trips or invite visitors into school as part of each term's work. This helps to broaden pupils' general knowledge and stimulates their interest in learning.
- Pupils learn to appreciate cultural and religious differences and are taught about diversity through assemblies and class discussions. For example, they celebrate the work of the artist Emmanuel Jegede as they explore African art.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, and the school's records confirm this. They trust adults to help them when they need it and know that problems will be resolved fairly.
- Some pupils take on positions of responsibility, such as subject ambassadors. They enjoy representing their peers and giving their views in discussions with subject leaders. However, they are not clear about the purpose of the role and are not regularly involved in making decisions that help to shape aspects of school life. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to develop these roles further.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In class, most pupils are attentive, listening to their teachers and keen to do their work. However, when work does not match the needs of pupils, some lose concentration and become distracted.
- A very large majority of pupils are courteous, polite and friendly. They show respect and consideration for visitors and their friends. A small number of pupils, however, display challenging behaviour. This is often managed very well in class, but some pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of others in school. Occasionally, pupils are disrespectful to others when moving around school, distracting groups working in open-plan areas.
- The playground has a good range of equipment, and staff have carefully considered the needs of pupils to ensure that they enjoy playtimes. This has reduced incidents of poor behaviour and means that most pupils get along well and have fun. Most pupils mix happily with one another and adhere to playground rules.
- The school has seen a significant increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions in the last two years. Several pupils are repeatedly excluded, and the strategies to

manage their behaviour are not having the desired effect. Many of these pupils are disadvantaged and with SEND, which means that they are missing valuable learning opportunities.

- Absence rates and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent are higher than the national average and both increased significantly in the last academic year. Leaders identified the problems and have worked hard to encourage good attendance. Regular contact with parents and the use of rewards have made a difference for some pupils. However, some of the initiatives are new and it is too soon to see sustained improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupil outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress in their learning across subjects and key stages. In key stage 1 in 2018, pupils' attainment was in the lowest 10% compared to all pupils nationally and no pupil reached greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics. A legacy of two years of staffing disruption has resulted in extensive gaps in learning for the pupils who are now in Year 3.
- For two out of the last three years, pupils' progress has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Progress improved for Year 6 in 2018 and was average for reading and writing and above average for mathematics. However, pupils' books and the school's own assessments show that progress across the school remains too variable in writing.
- Current work in pupils' books shows that some of the most able pupils are not sufficiently well challenged in their learning. No pupils reached greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics in key stage 1 in 2018. For key stage 2, the proportion of pupils, especially boys, reaching a greater depth of learning in all three subjects was lower than the national average. Progress for the most able pupils remains inconsistent over time.
- Disadvantaged pupils in each key stage are not making enough progress from their different starting points to catch up with their peers nationally. Their attainment is lower than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Very few of the most able disadvantaged pupils are reaching greater depth in writing or the higher standard in reading.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND varies, sometimes quite considerably. Some pupils make good progress and respond well to the extra support provided in class. Nevertheless, the small-group teaching is not always matched to the needs of pupils and they struggle to maintain concentration.
- Attainment in reading is improving, especially in key stage 2, where the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard was above average in 2018. Reading is promoted in lots of interesting ways, including presenting pupils with a book as a Christmas gift from the school.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2018 and compare favourably with national figures. Pupils' books show that the school's focus on improving pupils' fluency and reasoning skills is paying off. With

external support from the local authority, there is greater consistency in outcomes in mathematics across the school.

- In key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the combined reading, writing and mathematics element rose. This was significantly above the national average and a substantial improvement on the previous two years, when it was below average.
- Outcomes in science are improving. At the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was below average in science. Pupils' books confirm the school's monitoring information that an improvement in the teaching of science is leading to better progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start school in Reception with a wide variety of abilities. Some children possess knowledge and skills that are higher than expected for their age, whereas for others they are below. The majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress by the end of Reception as a result of effective teaching.
- Adults are good role models and set high and consistent expectations for children's behaviour and learning. Consequently, children know what is expected of them, behave well, feel safe and grow in confidence.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. The leader has an accurate understanding of the setting's strengths and development areas. Both the indoor and outdoor environments are well resourced and rich in activities to stimulate children's imagination. There are ample opportunities for children to practise early reading, writing and number skills.
- The well-targeted teaching and stimulating activities support children to make good progress from their starting points. Adults bring learning to life, seizing children's interest with exciting activities to extend their experiences. For example, children made links with the weather as they were encouraged to think deeply about how water turns to ice. They used scientific vocabulary as they predicted which of their previously frozen shapes would melt first because of temperature variations.
- Teaching assistants offer valuable support for children's learning. They ask questions that encourage children to think and investigate. They model spoken language precisely and encourage children to explain their learning accurately to others.
- Arrangements for safeguarding in the early years are appropriate. Staff monitor children closely to ensure that they are safe. Strong links with parents mean that communication is good and help and support offered quickly when needed.
- Parents value the close partnership with staff and appreciate the good communication between school and home. Weekly opportunities to visit the classroom and regular meetings ensure that valuable information is gathered and used to contribute to children's learning and assessment.

School details

Unique reference number	111137
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10082078

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	David Lundie
Headteachers	Claire Harrison and Lynn Guy
Telephone number	01606 288193
Website	www.leftwichprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@leftwichprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 September – 4 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school and caters for pupils from age four to 11 years old.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- There have been several changes in leadership responsibility since the last inspection, including the arrangement of a headteacher job-share with the deputy headteacher. There is a new chair of governors.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who receive additional support is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is slightly lower than average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. The inspectors also examined pupils' work in books from across the curriculum and considered assessment information.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, both individually and during their class activities.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day and took account of the views of 26 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered the views of 17 staff who completed the staff survey and the free-text comments from 16 parents.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with four governors, senior leaders, middle leaders, pastoral staff and local authority representatives.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed the safeguarding documentation and considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Cathy Parkinson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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