

Fender Primary School

New Hey Road, Woodchurch, Wirral, Merseyside, CH49 8HB

Inspection dates 12-13 November 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- The headteacher has high ambitions for pupils' personal development and academic achievement. Well supported by governors, staff and leaders at all levels, she is driving improvements. The school is improving.
- The school's commitment to ensuring all pupils equally succeed is strong. All pupils achieve well, and some outstandingly so, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is improving faster than the national rate by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress is in line and sometimes above the national average, particularly in writing.
- Teaching is now good with some outstanding.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They enjoy good relationships with all staff. Their attendance is improving.
- The school promotes pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the range of topics studied and activities provided.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough opportunities are provided for the sharing of outstanding practice that exists within the school.
- Targets for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not high enough to bring them closer to national averages by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils are not consistently given enough opportunities to work independently in lessons.
- Throughout the school, pupils are not given time to regularly practise correcting their spellings and punctuation.
- Teachers do not consistently insist on accuracy when pupils present mathematical information in different ways. Pupils do not consistently use and understand mathematical terms in their work.
- Attendance needs to improve further so that it is closer to the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 15 visits to lessons.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to register. However, responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school were analysed and a meeting was held with a group of parents.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors also held discussions with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to the school's plans for improvement, its procedures for checking the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Pupils' books were checked by inspectors.

Inspection team

Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Hilary Ward

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- On behalf of the local authority, the governing body manages two specially resourced provision bases, called Education Inclusion Bases. They provide long- and short-term placements for pupils with a statement of special educational needs from other primary schools across the local authority. They cater for pupils with a range of behavioural difficulties. Currently, they are providing for seven pupils in one base for younger pupils up to Year 3. In the other base, they cater for nine pupils from Years 4 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding, in order to raise achievement further by:
 - increasing the opportunities for teachers to share outstanding teaching with one another
 - setting more rigorous targets for pupils in Years 1 and 2 in order to raise their attainment further by the end of Year 2
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to work independently
 - giving time for pupils to regularly check and correct spellings and punctuation in their work
 - ensuring pupils use and understand mathematical terms and present mathematical data accurately in their work.
- Improve attendance rates further, so that they are much closer to the national average by:
 - continuing to remind parents about the importance of their children's regular attendance
 - checking the effectiveness of the most recent strategies introduced in order to further adapt or change them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress is now good throughout the school. This is because the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- Children start the Reception Year with skills which are often much lower than those typically expected for their age. As a result of strong links with parents and a local nursery, Reception staff know the children well and ensure that they plan to meet their individual needs. Children enter Year 1 with skills which are typically below those expected for their age, but have made good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils make faster rates of improvement than nationally, in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, attainment remains below the national average except most recently, in mathematics. This is due to low starting points, but also to targets that are not set high enough, to ensure that pupils reach much closer to the national average.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is improving strongly, particularly in writing. The proportion of pupils who make expected and better than expected progress, is at least in line and now often above national figures.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils make faster improvement in their attainment than nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall attainment is now broadly average. These levels of attainment represent good and sometimes outstanding progress from below and often well-below individual starting points. However, Year 6 pupils' attainment in the new measure of English, grammar and punctuation, is below average.
- A key strength in writing throughout the school is the care that is taken by pupils to present their work with good attention to handwriting across a range of subjects. They also show good interest in the range of topics given to inspire them to write, such as describing trips they have been on, studying the history of the local area or reflecting on how to overcome difficulties in their lives. However, they are not given enough opportunity to regularly practise checking and correcting their spellings and punctuation.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Younger pupils are increasingly able to recall tricky words and tackle unfamiliar words well. This is due to an improving understanding of the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. Their results in national reading tests are improving. Older pupils show good understanding of what they read and enjoy reading a range of books.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They enjoy problem-solving activities in class where they get to use a range of methods and thinking skills. However, sometimes pupils' work is not accurate in the way they present information, such as from surveys. They do not explain, or use important mathematical terms enough.
- The school demonstrates an excellent commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. The school uses the pupil premium as well as funding for special educational needs provision well. Pupils are regularly taught in small teaching groups and in groups set by ability in English and mathematics, to ensure that their specific needs are being met. All pupils, including the small numbers of the most-able pupils and those who do not have special educational needs, benefit well from this provision and make good progress.
- Pupils in the Educational Inclusion Bases achieve as well as others in the school and sometimes better, including when they are compared to others in the school who are disabled pupils and have special educational needs. Sometimes progress is outstanding for these pupils in some year groups and in some subjects such as reading and mathematics, in light of some very low starting points.
- In 2013, most pupils were supported by the pupil premium and known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6. Although this makes direct comparisons of their attainment with the very few pupils who were not eligible unreliable, their attainment was in line with similar pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. School data and inspection evidence show that currently throughout the school, there are few gaps between the progress of pupils supported

by the pupil premium and that of others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Common features include clear routines in lessons, positive relationships between teachers and pupils, and skilful use of questioning to assess pupils' learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in supporting and planning for the specific needs of all pupils.
- Helped by the setting of groups based on ability and need in English and mathematics, lessons provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils and move on at a lively pace, so that pupils are attentive and interested throughout. Small class sizes enable teachers to check pupils' work regularly and have more time to support pupils individually. As a result pupils make better than expected rates of progress.
- A real strength in teaching is the way that topics and activities are organised to promote strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout all year groups in the school. For example, pupils are stimulated to learn and write about the lives of influential people from different cultures and what they have achieved. Most impressively, in Year 5, after studying the life of a mountaineer, pupils were encouraged, through their writing, to reflect on the 'mountains' in their personal lives and how they have overcome them.
- Teaching in the Educational Inclusion Bases is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of work. Classrooms are well organised. For younger pupils, the use of the outdoor environment helps them to continue learning through play.
- The feedback teachers give to pupils about their work has improved well since the previous inspection. Comments on work give clear guidance to pupils on what to do to reach higher levels in their learning. Although teachers rightly identify mistakes in pupils' work, pupils are not given enough opportunities to regularly check for their own spelling and punctuation mistakes, and then correcting them.
- The outdoor environment is used well, for example by the Reception class, where children were observed naming, counting and recording the different shapes they see in the toys and grounds around them.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to solve mathematical problems and to discuss them in class, across a range of topics they study. However, sometimes teachers do not consistently ensure pupils understand and use mathematical terms correctly, and that they accurately present mathematical information accurately.
- Teachers ensure pupils work well together. However, not enough opportunities are given for pupils to learn independently where they are more than capable of doing so.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good overall in the school. Although they readily admit that they sometimes have problems with a small minority of pupils, they say that learning usually takes place uninterrupted across the school.
- Pupils who have been in the school since the last inspection say that behaviour has improved well. This is due to good management of behaviour by staff and positive rewards and encouragement. Records on pupils' behaviour indicate that incidents, including exclusions, have significantly fallen.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They show interest in their work and respond quickly to instructions in class. Pupils with behavioural needs, particularly those in the Educational Inclusion Bases, are given good levels of additional support. The school can point to good improvements over time for such pupils.
- Prefects help to look after younger pupils and help to establish orderly entry into and from the playgrounds during break and lunch times.

- Pupils play well together and get on well with staff. They feel safe from bullying and have a good understanding of different types of safety, including internet safety.
- Conversations with parents as well as the school's most recent parental survey indicate that parents are supportive of the school and with the way that behaviour is managed and improving.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance using a variety of strategies. This includes working with support staff to liaise more actively with families and to encourage the regular attendance of specific groups of pupils. However, although attendance is improving, it is still below the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher constantly looks for ways of further improving pupils' achievement, personal development and well-being. Staff are constantly challenged but well supported. Staff morale is high.
- Governors, leaders at all levels and staff have tackled weaknesses with determination. Teaching, pupils' behaviour and achievement have been improving well since the last inspection. The school has a strong capacity to build on its good practice and to sustain improvements.
- Although leaders have not yet secured teaching of a consistently outstanding quality, the rigorous and varied checks made on the quality of teaching, and well-focused training delivered by subject leaders, have helped to improve the quality of teaching to consistently good. However, not enough of the outstanding practice within the school is shared.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress the pupils in their classes make and arrangements to check the performance of teachers are fully in place, thorough and clearly linked to salary progression.
- The leadership of Educational Inclusion Bases is good, leading to good and sometimes outstanding achievement of pupils.
- The local authority provided effective support for the school soon after its last inspection and accurately judged how well it has been doing. More recently, owing to the confidence in the quality of leadership at all levels in the school, the local authority now only provides minimal support, while still responding when asked for advice or guidance by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is good. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and have been appropriately trained to analyse and interpret performance data in order to check on whether pupils are learning as best as they can. As a result they are able to provide good challenge as well as support to the school. Governors understand how the system to check the performance of staff is helping to improve the quality of teaching, and ensure that salary increases and promotions are only awarded to staff when they have met their targets. Governors ensure that financial management is matched well to improving pupils' achievement and the impact is carefully scrutinised. For example, they know the difference that the pupil-premium funding is making through the targeted teaching programmes for literacy and numeracy. They are also aware of the impact of the Primary School Sports funding on improving the teaching of physical education, for example, using a specialist teacher to coach staff to teach pupils new skills, for example, in gymnastics.

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 | 105039 |
| Local authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 426075 |

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 | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 212 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Gill Curry |
| Headteacher | Louise Seargeant |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 September 2011 |
| Telephone number | 0151 6770425 |
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