

# Overchurch Junior School

Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 4NS

## Inspection dates

16–17 May 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are consistently good.
- Governors have not effectively held leaders to account for the quality of education. Their evaluation of the school is overgenerous.
- Progress in mathematics and reading has, until recently, been weak. As a result, pupils have not achieved as well as they could.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well. Their progress, although improving, is not strong enough to ensure that the difference in achievement with other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is inconsistent and does not ensure that pupils make good progress over time.
- The monitoring of teaching does not consistently build on previously identified areas for development.
- Teaching does not provide consistent challenge to pupils to extend their learning. At times, teachers' expectations for pupils' learning are too low.
- Systems to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress are improving. However, they do not ensure that leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the impact of new initiatives.
- Monitoring of the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities does not provide a clear enough view of outcomes for these pupils, or the impact of the use of funding.
- Middle leadership roles are developing. Some middle leaders do not effectively promote improvement to teaching and learning in their subject.
- Attendance and levels of persistent absence, although improving, remain an area for the school to address.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They show positive attitudes to their learning.
- The curriculum provides a broad and interesting range of subjects and is enhanced by extra-curricular activities.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are improving as a result of staff training and improvements to assessment systems. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now making good progress in reading and mathematics.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, particularly in lower key stage 2, by ensuring that:
  - teachers more skilfully question and challenge pupils to extend their learning
  - teaching provides a greater focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation skills
  - new approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics are firmly embedded.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by ensuring that leaders work collectively to:
  - enable governors to develop a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and their role in providing challenge to school leaders
  - further develop systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, including that of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, so that all leaders and governors have a clearer picture of the impact of teaching and new initiatives
  - ensure that the monitoring of teaching more consistently builds on previously identified areas for development
  - develop the role of middle leaders, so that they have greater impact in improving the quality of teaching and outcomes in their subjects
  - further reduce levels of persistent absence and raise levels of attendance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been slow to adapt to the changes in national curriculum expectations. A lack of unity within the leadership team, and between leaders and staff, has hampered the pace of improvement. Following a local authority review in January 2018, requested by the headteacher, leaders have worked more closely and determinedly to bring about improvement. As a result, staff morale has improved, and the pace of improvement has accelerated. However, some initiatives have yet to be firmly established, and the quality of teaching over time and outcomes for pupils remain inconsistent.
- The headteacher and deputy have improved systems to manage teaching performance. Annual targets are clear and relate to the school's objectives in its development plan. Teaching is regularly monitored. Training in the teaching of mathematics has had a positive impact on improving staff subject knowledge and teaching skills. As a result, progress and attainment in mathematics have improved, particularly in upper key stage 2. However, the monitoring of teaching does not consistently build on previously identified areas for development, and some aspects of teaching still require improvement.
- Some subject leadership is effective. For example, the leadership of mathematics is effective in promoting improved teaching and progress in this subject. The mathematics leader has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and has clear plans to build further on the improvements made.
- Other subject leaders are at an earlier stage of developing their leadership roles. Although they oversee teaching and progress, they do not have a close understanding of these, and so are not yet effective in promoting improvement in their subject areas.
- Leaders have introduced systems to monitor pupils' progress in learning more closely. This means that leaders have an overall picture of progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the impact of initiatives to improve learning further, such as those to accelerate reading and to develop learning for disadvantaged pupils, are not monitored closely enough. As a result, the extent to which pupils' learning has improved is not clear.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide extra support to pupils to promote their learning in, for example, mathematics and phonics. It is also used to ensure that support is in place to improve pupils' attendance and emotional well-being. The use of this funding is not monitored closely enough to show how initiatives are having an impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used appropriately to provide support for pupils. The special educational needs coordinator has an overview of pupils' progress, but tracking of progress is not fully effective in identifying gaps in pupils' learning.
- Leaders make good use of the primary sports funding to provide sports coaching, swimming lessons and to improve the school's participation in inter-school competitions. This has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of, and participation in, sports.

- The curriculum offers a broad range of subjects for pupils, providing interesting opportunities for learning. This includes music lessons and a number of well-attended lunchtime and after-school clubs, such as chess, school radio, yoga, cricket and rounders.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of British values and their spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils learn about other cultures, faiths and beliefs. They have a strong moral code and know the importance of school rules. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy through, for example, elections to the school council.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school. Their review of the school identified key areas for the school to develop to improve leadership, teaching and outcomes. The local authority has commissioned two local schools to provide advice and support in making these improvements.
- Leaders have embraced this support. Staff have visited other schools to observe good practice and leaders have taken on board advice from other school leaders in making improvements. The improvements to teaching and progress to date indicate that leaders have the capacity to bring about further improvement.
- Improvements to staff morale are illustrated by the positive responses to the staff survey. All staff who responded reported that they are proud to work at the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are supportive of the school. They are informed about pupils' progress through the headteacher's reports. However, they lack a clear understanding of this information in terms of what the key strengths and weaknesses are in pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have an overgenerous view of the effectiveness of the school. They have confidence in leaders to act on any weaknesses identified, but they do not challenge leaders or hold them to account for their actions strongly enough.
- Governors keep a close eye on finances. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent, but not of the impact of this spending on progress for this group of pupils.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Following on from the local authority review, leaders have improved safeguarding practices. As a result, there is a stronger culture of safeguarding than previously. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding policies are up to date and that staff receive regular training.
- Staff know the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a pupil. Referrals are made promptly and followed up vigilantly.
- The school works well with parents and with other professionals, including social care and mental health professionals, to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety and say that they feel safe in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Until recently, teaching has resulted in pupils' weak progress in mathematics and reading and average progress in writing. Although teaching is now improving, it is not consistently good across year groups and subjects.
- At times, teachers' expectations for pupils' learning are too low, with the result that pupils sometimes complete tasks which are too easy and lack challenge. This means that pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers sometimes ask questions of pupils which effectively encourage them to think. For example, in an upper key stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were asked questions such as, 'What do you notice? What can you do if the line is incomplete?' as they solved problems involving line graphs.
- At other times, teachers give answers too readily or ask questions which guide pupils towards a limited choice of answers, rather than encouraging them to think through a problem for themselves.
- The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is inconsistent. At times, basic errors are not identified and addressed, or expectations for pupils' learning are not high enough. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not make consistently good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving and is leading to better progress. Teachers' improved subject knowledge is helping to ensure that learning is promoted more effectively. Teachers are becoming more skilled at developing pupils' problem-solving abilities.
- The teaching of reading is also improving. Staff training and new initiatives in the teaching of reading are being used increasingly well to improve progress. Some of these strategies are new and have not had time to become fully established, however.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. They say that they enjoy coming to school and 'love the teachers'. Pupils engage well in the activities provided. Many were proud to show their work to inspectors.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, and this contributes to pupils' self-confidence and progress. During lessons, pupils cooperate well to share ideas and show respect for the opinions of others.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They show confidence in the work of the pastoral support worker as someone whom they can always go to if they need help.
- Pupils enjoy their positions of responsibility as school council member, 'worry warriors' and 'buddies' for younger pupils. Their emotional well-being is promoted through

discussions about, for example, ways of improving concentration and managing emotions.

- Pupils have an excellent knowledge of online safety. This learning is reinforced by activities such as a visit from a police officer to talk about the dangers of social media.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is good. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's behaviour policy and systems. These clear expectations contribute to their good standard of behaviour.
- On occasion, where teaching is not closely meeting needs, pupils can become distracted and restless, and this can affect their learning.
- Pupils report that bullying in the school seldom happens, and where it does they have confidence in staff to sort out the problem.
- Pupils' overall attendance is slightly below the national average. Persistent absence is higher than that found nationally but has improved this year. Leaders and staff work positively with parents to ensure that the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing further. A reward system is in place which encourages positive attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in mathematics and reading over the last three years has not been good enough. Published data shows that writing progress has been average, but progress in reading was below average, and in mathematics well below average. In the last year, improvements to the quality of teaching have led to improvements in progress. Current pupils' progress in a range of subjects is improving but it is not consistently good.
- In 2017, attainment at the expected standard and at the higher standard rose in reading, writing and mathematics, but remained below average in reading and mathematics. The work in pupils' books and school information show that attainment is rising in school, and more pupils are working at the standards expected for their age.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving, along with that of their peers. However, their progress is not fast enough for them to make up for their lack of achievement in the past.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are appropriately supported to make similar progress to their peers. Individual pupil records and pupils' work confirm this.
- The most able pupils do not make consistently good progress, because, at times, teaching lacks challenge and expectations for pupils' learning are too low.
- Pupils' progress in reading is variable. Upper key stage 2 pupils are making better progress. They read fluently and talk confidently about their favourite authors. However, lower key stage 2 pupils do not show the same confidence or love of reading as older pupils.

- The school's focus on improving outcomes in mathematics is beginning to bear fruit. Current pupils in upper key stage 2 make good progress in mathematics. The current Year 6 are predicted to attain much better than previous year groups, and a scrutiny of their work confirms this assessment. Progress in lower key stage 2 is more variable.
- Pupils' progress in writing is improving and is stronger in upper key stage 2 than in lower key stage 2. Pupils throughout the school make variable progress in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils develop skills and understanding in a range of subjects, including Spanish and music. Inconsistencies in teaching across year groups and subjects mean that outcomes vary, and some pupils do not achieve as well as they could do.

## School details

Unique reference number	105056
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10045858

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	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Peter Elliot
Headteacher	Mr Gerard Lahive
Telephone number	0151 677 4150
Website	<a href="http://www.overchurch-junior.wirral.sch.uk">www.overchurch-junior.wirral.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:schooloffice@overchurch-junior.wirral.sch.uk">schooloffice@overchurch-junior.wirral.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 April 2014

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average junior school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the vice-chair of the governing body and three other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement officer.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 39 parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 39 responses to the online pupils' questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Dimeck	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector

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