

All Saints Upton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hough Green Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 4PG

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Under the leadership of a determined headteacher, the school has improved substantially since its previous inspection.
- Staff describe a 'culture shift' over the past two years where aspirations and expectations have been raised. Parents and pupils agree.
- As a result, standards of pupils' work have improved, as have opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum. From their starting points in Reception, pupils make good progress and typically achieve average standards at the end of Year 6 with many surpassing these.
- A dedicated group of governors has overseen swift and concerted action to raise achievement across the school.
- Pupils read well and take increasing pride in their written work.
- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers know their pupils well and give them very good guidance and support.
- The happy and energetic pupils behave well throughout the school. They feel safe and are cared for sensitively.
- Parents are very supportive of the changes at the school. 'It has improved massively,' was a typical response.
- The provision for children in the Reception class is outstanding. Teaching is highly skilled and all children make excellent progress.
- The school is successful in promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. It prepares them well for their future life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The impact of teaching on achievement is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils' work within lessons is not always checked as rapidly as it could be to improve achievement further, especially in mathematics lessons.
- Pupils do not always respond to the feedback and the challenges that are offered to them.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these were joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils, school staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed samples of pupils' work in their books and also on displays around school. Portfolios of evidence from pupils' work in Key Stage 1 prepared for external checking were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took note of the 30 returns to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to a number of parents in school and on the playground. They also took note of the 15 staff questionnaires that were returned.
- Inspectors carried out further observations in lessons, around the school, in assemblies and on the playgrounds.
- A range of documents was taken into account, especially relating to the current progress and attainment of pupils, and those relating to how the school keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average primary school.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has been receiving support from a local leader of education (LLE) from Stockbridge Village Primary School in Knowsley local authority. It has also been receiving support through a project with the local teaching school at Wade Deacon High School.
- Since the last inspection, there has been an external review of governance and a full reconstitution of the governing body has taken place.
- Provision for the early years is in a full-time Reception class.
- A children's centre and day care facility share the same site as the school.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be outstanding in its impact on achievement by:
 - intervening more rapidly in mathematics lessons so that pupils overcome any misconceptions quicker than they currently do
 - continuing to improve the marking procedures in all subjects so that pupils respond better to the feedback and advice that are given.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Over the past two years, school leaders have initiated many changes which have had a very positive impact on teaching and the achievement of pupils. There is a strong ethos that permeates the school and where good behaviour flourishes.
- Since the arrival of the current headteacher, he and his team have been determined to improve standards of teaching. Underperformance has been challenged successfully. Staff have benefited from performance management systems which are now rigorous and based clearly on teachers' standards and increased expectations.
- Information related to pupils' achievement is checked regularly and shared throughout the staff and governors. Staff set challenging targets for pupils in each year group and these are regularly evaluated.
- Leaders seek to be open and transparent, encouraging governors and parents to see the ongoing work of pupils and comment on it. For example, work is sent home to parents every three weeks as part of the '16th day' initiative. They are able to monitor their children's progress and respond to the class teacher with any arising issues. The initiative is also used to celebrate the pupils' learning.
- The work of middle leaders has resulted in better outcomes for pupils. This is because they monitor standards of pupils' performance carefully and alter the curriculum activities and teaching strategies decisively as a result.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. The school council has assisted staff in becoming ambassadors for Unicef. The restorative practice that staff and pupils use to resolve differences and incidents is evidence of a strong commitment to knowing right from wrong and illustrates how the school fosters good relationships.
- British values are embedded throughout the school and are central to the school's work. Regular philosophy sessions challenge pupils to discuss concepts of fairness and the following of rules. This year, a cohort of pupils will be graduating from the local children's university as a result of their participation in a range of school activities.
- Leaders support the large number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs very well. They communicate effectively with other agencies to secure the correct support and are careful to adjust provision in order to include these pupils fully. This inclusive culture is typical of the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Financial management is secure and the school ensures that pupil premium funding is carefully spent and checked to ensure value for money. As a result, those pupils who are entitled to support are progressing at a rate which is often higher than that found nationally.
- The curriculum is led well. Rates of participation in enrichment and sporting activities have surged and provide good evidence that the primary physical education and sports funding is used very effectively. Teams representing All Saints now habitually appear in local competitions, giving many pupils valuable experiences of testing their skills against other schools.
- A good range of support has been secured by the school, including the advice of a local leader of education and from the local teaching school. Together with the support received from the local authority, this has assisted the school to improve and has been very effective. It is a sign of how much the school has developed that these support networks are now required less and less.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Arrangements are effective; pupils are safe and are looked after well, both in and out of school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective because governors challenge leaders and they have concentrated steadfastly on improving outcomes for pupils. Since the last inspection, there has been an external review of governance which has led to a recent reconstitution. The recent period of change has been smooth and successful; key members of the governing body are in place. All have attended training events and this now makes them better placed to check on data relating to the progress of pupils and challenge decisions made by school leaders.
 - Governors have sensibly sought the advice and support of local school leaders and advisors, but this influence is now less apparent as the level of skills within the governing body has sharpened. Through regular visits to school, including observations of pupils at work and through looking at their work, governors have a growing understanding of the quality of teaching. They oversee a well-structured system of performance management that ensures that outcomes for pupils are linked to pay progression. They are diligent in carrying out their statutory duties with regard to the safeguarding of pupils and safe recruitment of staff. Their management of finances is prudent, in particular their

influence in planning and evaluating the spending of the pupil premium and sport funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils at the school are typically respectful, polite and calm. The school's developing curriculum encourages pupils to listen carefully, respect opinions and value thinking skills typified within the weekly philosophy sessions.
- Behaviour in lessons is positive. Where the impact of teaching is most effective, the pupils display very good levels of sustained listening, collaborative teamwork and careful thought.
- There is a pride throughout the school which is apparent in the presentation of the pupils' work, their standards of uniform and the way they are ready and alert for lessons. Staff are vigilant in upholding these high standards, for example through the modelling of handwriting in pupils' books.
- Pupils are given a range of activities at lunchtime and other break times. While these are valued by pupils, they also report some boisterous activity during these times which does, at times, affect their enjoyment.
- Pupils are very clear about the dangers of cyber-bullying. They can give clear examples of how the school has taught them how to keep safe. For example, they know how some medicine can be harmful.
- Mirroring the school's improvements over the last two years, the attendance of pupils has also increased and is in line with national averages. It is monitored closely and the school is pro-active in working closely with parents where individual cases give cause for concern.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school works hard to ensure that the site is safe. The regular access of parents and visitors to the children's centre and day care, which are on the same site, is controlled very well.
- Pupils speak fluently of the way the school educates them about other faiths and cultures, helping them to avoid the use of any discriminatory language.
- Bullying is non-existent according to pupils and parents are satisfied that, if it does occur, staff are vigilant in taking action to tackle this successfully. A feature of the school is the time given to allow pupils to understand the impact of incidents on their peers. Pupils value these opportunities, saying teachers 'are so caring when you're upset', a view which was typical of those heard.
- Pupils talk confidently about how they can keep themselves safe. They have a good sense of where they can go to seek support both within school and through external sources.
- The school ensures that all checks are carried out before adults can work with pupils in school. Key senior staff and governors have received relevant training in the safer recruitment of staff. Records are kept which show both actions taken and the impact of these actions on the well-being of pupils.
- The headteacher, as the lead officer for safeguarding, is careful to consider a whole range of strategies to support pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable, liaising with a variety of agencies. Inspectors were able to see how this considered approach had led to lasting benefits to individual pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good because of the raised expectations from senior staff and because of the timely and targeted professional development that has energised staff throughout the school. It is excellent in the Reception class.
- Phonics (the blending letter sounds to help form words) is taught well. There is a whole-school, consistent approach to this, allowing pupils to make good progress.
- When having its strongest impact on learning and achievement, teaching is exciting. This was evident when a teacher brought a group of delighted pupils into a virtual 'candy wonderland' which then linked in with their phonic development. Other teaching gives pupils lengthy opportunities to develop a deep knowledge of new areas of the curriculum, for example learning how to write in computer programming language during a Year 6 computing lesson.
- Work is valued and marked well, with teachers careful to set good examples over presentation. The school's marking policy is followed consistently. It is understood by pupils but the school has yet to develop an effective system to manage the feedback and responses from pupils. Lea already have plans to

development this.

- A key feature of the good teaching is the teachers' subject knowledge. This is accurate and allows for confident delivery and modelling in most cases. This is coupled with good questioning and skilful reshaping of tasks, especially for younger pupils.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Teachers have both a good grasp of the technical skills needed to teach reading. They are perceptive in ensuring pupils have a broad range of reading genres from which to learn about different authors and styles. Reading is promoted well across the school and efforts to engage parents in reading are successful.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. A dedicated subject leader has led changes to the curriculum this year. This has allowed teachers to give far more practical, real-life opportunities both in mathematics lessons and through their topic work. However, on occasions, teachers do not intervene quickly enough to adapt work for those who are finding it too hard or too easy.
- The school recognised that its teaching of writing and particularly grammar and spelling needed improvement last year. Leaders have addressed this by altering teaching strategies, leading to significant improvements for pupils across the school. Teaching pupils Latin, in an effort to assist them with a better grammatical knowledge, has contributed to this outcome.
- The school provides regular and carefully planned support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching support assistants make a valuable contribution to the development and good progress of these pupils.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is rapidly improving throughout the school and across all core subjects.
- The proportion of pupils the Year 1 phonics check is close to the national average. The consistency of this figure over two years matches the good teaching of phonics seen in different classes.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained standards in 2014 which were broadly in line with national averages. At the time of the inspection, portfolios of work for 2015 standards were being checked by a variety of external examiners and these were also looked at by inspectors. They present a convincing case that standards have risen in writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, standards overall were broadly average. Given the pupils' individual starting points when they joined the school, this represented good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils generally make similar rates of progress to other pupils nationally. In 2014, at the end of Key Stage 2, they were just over a term behind other pupils nationally in reading and writing and about two terms behind in mathematics. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils of their age in the school was approximately half a term in mathematics and a year in writing. In reading, they were half a term ahead of their peers. These gaps have been narrowed over the course of their time at the school, and in reading disadvantaged pupils overtook others in the class. Current assessment information in the school, and careful observations of the progress of this group of pupils, confirm that this gap continues to narrow this year in all subjects.
- Good standards of presentation and pride in work are sustained across the curriculum. For example, entertaining Pompeii play-scripts are written in Year 4 and opportunities are given for pupils to develop basic writing and mathematical skills across several subjects. This has developed especially well over the past 12 months.
- Expectations are high in computing and sport, typical of the raising of expectations for pupils' achievement across a wide range of subjects. Such ambition ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages and are increasing. Some of the mathematical thinking of the most-able pupils in Year 6 is of an extremely high standard. This is a result of improvements in the teaching of mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Work is carefully modified to maximise gains, especially for those who receive individual support. The progress of pupils who have come to the school recently, some with a high level of need, has been rapid.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- The achievement of children in the early years is outstanding as a result of outstanding leadership and management combined with high quality teaching. Many children begin the Reception class with skills in writing, reading and number which are below those typical for their age. The excellent provision means they catch up well and are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Teaching in the Reception class is outstanding. This is because the regular high-quality questioning and relentless focus on developing early language skills has led to excellent outcomes for these children.
- Expectations are very high. For example, the quality of writing and letter formation have improved significantly since the beginning of the year. This is because they have such a high profile and are taught confidently. An example of this is the 'write-dance' daily session which assists with pencil control and letter formation.
- Behaviour is outstanding. All children observed were engaged and enthralled. On the rare occasions when their behaviour is challenging, the way in which children are calmed and then coaxed back into learning is indicative of the tremendous skill displayed by staff and of a very inclusive ethos.
- Links between teacher-led activities and the children's own chosen activities are managed very well. Children were totally immersed in the character and feelings of 'a giant' who, it seemed, was actually lying in the corner of the classroom, such was the reality of the children's conversations.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the support given to them and their children when starting school. There is a wide range of opportunities for parents to get involved in their child's learning, such as making their own mathematics books at home. Evaluations completed by parents, following on from such opportunities, are overwhelmingly positive.
- One feature of the outstanding teaching is the high standard of questioning. Language is modelled extremely well and encourages children to add colourful description and share opinions. This all helps to develop a confidence and well-being in children which is key positive feature of the setting.
- The environment is safe and attractive. Support staff are deployed well and contribute substantially to the overall care, guidance and welfare of the children, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs. Training has been provided for all staff including visits to other settings; staff report this to have had a positive impact on the improvements that have been made.
- Opportunities to develop children's independence are central to the class activities. Children were observed writing letters and making crowns for the giant without adult prompting. They used phonetically plausible spelling and advanced fine-motor skills.
- The leader is involved in school self-evaluation and school improvement, working closely with other school leaders, for example to ensure English policies and transitions to Year 1 are smoothly instigated.

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	131217
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	462336

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Banks
Headteacher	Chris McConnell
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2013
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