

Inspection of Westfield Primary School

Clayton Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4TR

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils we spoke with and who completed the pupil questionnaire told us they enjoy school and that it is a safe place to be.

Most pupils think behaviour in lessons is good and this is what we saw in most of the lessons we visited. We saw occasional silly behaviour and pupils not paying full attention, but nothing disruptive.

Some pupils think that behaviour at playtime is a bit rough. We saw boisterous, but good-natured, behaviour. When lively children are playing with balls and hoops, some bumps and trips occur. Staff are on hand to supervise pupils and are trained to give first aid if needed. This is what we saw. Some parents are concerned that playtimes are dangerous. We did not find this to be the case, but there is scope for leaders to review playtime organisation.

Pupils told us that they like and trust their teachers and the staff who look after them at breaktimes. Pupils explained that staff sort out anything that bothers them. Most pupils told us that staff deal well with any bullying that occurs. The school's records indicate that this is the case.

Some pupils think that the work they do in class is too easy, some think it is too hard and others think it is just right. Pupils have pretty much summed the situation up correctly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders ensure that teachers know exactly what they should teach in English, mathematics and science, and when they should teach it. This type of guidance is still at the planning stage for other subjects. Sometimes, teachers do not choose appropriate activities or resources to help pupils learn what they want. This means that pupils do not benefit from well-planned curriculums and effective teaching in all subjects. The result is that pupils are not achieving as well as they should in all the subjects they study.

During key stage 2, pupils make too little progress in writing. Long-standing gaps in their learning remain. The English leader knows what needs to be done, but some teaching is not strong enough to move learning on. By the end of Year 6, standards remain well below average. Progress is better in key stage 1. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are much closer to those expected for pupils' age.

Achievement in reading has improved. Most pupils are now attaining the expected standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There is much expert teaching of phonics, but a small amount of teaching is not as effective as it should be. Nevertheless, by Year 3, most pupils read fluently and with expression. They rarely have to sound out words. Most pupils in key stage 2 read accurately, but many do

not know the meaning of some of the words they read. This stops pupils from developing a deep understanding of what they read.

Children in the early years take part in a wide range of activities and make progress in all areas of learning. At the end of Reception, the proportion of children ready for Year 1 is not too far below other children this age. The opportunities for children to learn outdoors have improved. However, not all the staff who teach the children outdoors are effective in moving learning on or managing children's behaviour. Staff have warm relationships with the children, which makes the children feel safe. There is generally good communication with parents and carers.

Last year, the proportion of pupils who were regularly absent from school more than doubled. Lost days at school mean that pupils miss out on important learning. The new interim headteacher is taking swift action to tackle this issue.

Leaders and staff want pupils to become responsible citizens. In assemblies and lessons, they teach pupils about important people and events, how to stay safe, and to be responsible. Pupils learn about British values. They are also taught how to recognise and react to bullying, but leaders can do more to help pupils understand these matters.

Teachers show sensitivity in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adapt work and give pupils extra help so pupils with SEND can achieve success. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are included in all lessons. Their progress is monitored. This is the same for other vulnerable pupils.

There has been major disruption to staffing since the last inspection, including at leadership level. This, and initial resistance to the findings of the last inspection, stalled the course of improvement. During this period, some senior leaders have not had the opportunity to develop their role.

Currently, there is some strong leadership of subjects, but some curriculum leaders are new to their role. The interim headteacher has identified the most important things to improve the school further. Staff and parents have welcomed the clear direction for improvement the interim headteacher has set.

The addition of two very experienced governors, and a skilled acting chair, has made the governing body more effective. Governors now ask leaders the right questions about the school's work. They want to know about pupils' achievement, behaviour and safety.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school. All the relevant checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Safeguarding training for staff is up to date. Staff know the steps to follow if they

are worried about a pupil's welfare. They know what to do (and what not to do) if a pupil tells them something of a safeguarding nature. The school's records show that safeguarding leaders act quickly on any concerns that staff pass on. As necessary, leaders seek professional advice and are not afraid to challenge it, in pupils' best interests.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not achieving as well as they should in the foundation subjects. In these subjects, leaders have not carefully considered the content or order of the curriculum. Curriculum leaders should therefore identify what they want pupils to know and remember and decide the order in which this knowledge will be taught.
- When teachers do not choose appropriate activities or resources to enable pupils to learn what they intend, learning is impaired. Teachers should also consider the amount of new content they ask pupils to remember. Furthermore, before they teach new things and difficult ideas, teachers should ensure that pupils have the prior knowledge needed.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in writing. They struggle to write at length and to use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders should ensure that teachers address gaps in pupils' learning and enable pupils to make strong progress in writing.
- Many pupils do not have a good enough knowledge of word meanings. This impedes pupils' understanding of what they read and their knowledge in a range of subjects. Leaders should ensure a continued and intensive focus on increasing pupils' understanding of word meanings to improve their comprehension.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent and miss important learning. Leaders should ensure that more pupils attend school every day.
- There are gaps in pupils' understanding of what constitutes bullying. Pupils' knowledge of British values is sketchy. Leaders should promote British values more regularly and meaningfully.
- Not all early years staff ensure that children learn or behave well when working outdoors. Leaders need to ensure that the potential of the improved outdoor environment and resources is used to best effect to develop children's learning and behaviour.
- The disruption at leadership level has impeded the development of some senior leaders' roles. The interim headteacher has identified necessary training to support these leaders in contributing further to the way the school is led and managed. These plans should go ahead.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111240
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10110892
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting chair of governing body	Lynne Farrow
Headteacher	Sandra Pope (Interim acting headteacher)
Website	www.westfieldprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	6 June and 27–28 June 2017

Information about this school

- Since the school was last inspected, there has been significant disruption to staffing. The substantive headteacher has been absent from school for over a year.
- Three interim headteachers have led the school during the substantive headteacher's absence. The current interim acting headteacher is one of these and had been in role for three weeks at the time of the inspection.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has had three chairs of the governing body, including the current acting chair. A number of governors have resigned, and new governors have been appointed.
- The local authority has provided significant support to the school during the substantive headteacher's absence, including financial support.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club, managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the interim acting headteacher, the assistant headteacher who is the coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo), and the early years leader. We met three representatives from Halton local authority. These were the operational director for educational inclusion and provision, the divisional manager for education, and the school's improvement partner. We met three members of the governing body, including the acting chair.
- We considered reading, writing, science and geography during this inspection. For these subjects, we met the curriculum leaders, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. We spoke to pupils about their work in these subjects and heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 3 read. We spoke to the teachers whose lessons we visited.
- In our inspection of safeguarding, we checked the school's single central record; had discussions with safeguarding leaders; checked records of staff training and spoke to staff about this. We reviewed logs of behaviour and bullying and checked how leaders had investigated and resolved bullying incidents. We reviewed child protection documentation, including referrals to the local authority, and communications with professional agencies. We reviewed information about pupils' absence. We spoke with pupils, observed playtimes and checked the school grounds.
- In evaluating other aspects of the school's work, we visited lessons in religious education and mathematics. We attended an assembly and spoke with pupils about aspects of their personal development. We reviewed a range of school documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and their plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Fann

Ofsted Inspector

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