

Penketh South Community Primary School

Finlay Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2PN

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils thrive in the caring environment of this much-improved school. They become confident and capable learners who are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- The headteacher provides good leadership, fully supported by the staff and governors. All have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors are dedicated, and challenge school leaders appropriately to ensure continued improvement.
- Staff are committed to bringing about further improvements and morale is high. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are effective over time. Where teaching is the strongest, good questioning enables pupils to reflect, reason and build on their learning. Not all teaching is as good as the best yet.
- The varied and diverse curriculum offers pupils many exciting opportunities to learn. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is strong
- Across the school, almost all pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. There are times when teaching does not challenge the most able groups of pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They are eager to explain their learning and share their ideas. They show great respect for each other and for adults.
- Provision in the early years is outstanding. Children are supported by highly focused staff who plan rigorously to enable all children to make rapid progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Parents acknowledge and appreciate the care and support provided by the school for themselves and their children. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.
- Leaders and managers carefully analyse the attainment of pupils. However, this information is not always used to monitor the progress of all groups. Consequently, some of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 and so raise standards of achievement by ensuring that:
 - teaching fully challenges the most able pupils in their learning so that they achieve the highest possible outcomes
 - leaders continue to rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that examples of good practice are shared effectively
 - leaders further embed assessment systems for different groups of pupils so that staff can intervene more quickly when pupils fall behind.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Pupils, parents, teachers, senior leaders and governors talk with great enthusiasm about how this school has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher provides strong, sharply focused leadership. She is supported well by senior leaders, a strong staff team and an invigorated governing body.
- Leaders and governors have maintained a secure focus on improving the school's performance despite significant staffing changes. Because of the firm management by the headteacher, the quality of teaching has improved and almost all pupils now make good progress across the school. Where progress has in the past been less strong, as suggested by the 2016 assessment results for reading, leaders have acted decisively and their actions have brought about clear improvements.
- Leaders have clear aspirations for the school and these are understood clearly by all staff. Staff have high expectations of their pupils and of themselves and they feel nurtured and supported by the leadership team. This contributes to the friendly and highly caring ethos across the school.
- Leaders and governors work together to ensure that they have a clear understanding of their school and the main issues that they need to address to continue to improve the school further. They have developed appropriate plans to support improvement, which they review systematically. The review of plans ensures that leaders and governors know how their work is impacting on learning.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders carry out regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and the standard of work in books. These processes have greatly impacted on standards across the school. Monitoring has helped teachers to improve the quality of teaching and to know how well pupils are progressing.
- Senior leaders have introduced more effective systems to track pupils' progress across the school. Teachers discuss their pupils' progress at termly review meetings, and additional checks are provided by literacy and numeracy leaders. As a result, teachers are beginning to respond swiftly to address underachievement and plan interventions to support pupils in making better progress. The tracking system changes are not yet fully embedded across all curriculum subjects to specific target groups of pupils, for example the most able and the most able disadvantaged. Because of this, interventions are not as well targeted and this group of pupils does not make as much progress as it could.
- Middle leaders are now increasingly strong. They have a clear overview of their areas of responsibility, which enables them to take actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, subject leaders now use planning and assessment information more effectively to help them to provide support for teachers. However, they do not consistently use this information to monitor how well pupils are progressing in different subject areas.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers' performance management has been highly focused on securing improvements. Outcomes are scrutinised and probed closely by the senior leaders and governors, a process which has had a positive effect on pupils'

progress. Leaders have acted to improve teaching, identifying when this a strength and supporting staff where there are weaknesses. Teachers report that feedback from senior leaders, especially through performance management, improves teaching and their practice.

- Good use is made of the pupil premium funding to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils so they make good progress and have equal access to activities that broaden their experiences. Leaders have a clear rationale and actions to support pupils. Actions are monitored through pupil progress reviews. The most able disadvantaged pupils are targeted through pupil progress meetings, but the impact of pupil premium funding on this group of pupils is unclear. Governors have a clear overview of the school's support for disadvantaged pupils but they are not yet using this information to fully hold leaders to account.
- The primary sports funding is used well to offer additional clubs and activities both during and after school. It has also been used to provide additional specialist training for all staff to develop their teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, more pupils now take part in a range of different sports, which has had a positive impact on their performance and well-being.
- Leaders carefully review additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They clearly identify pupil needs and organise professional development for staff to ensure that pupils are supported well. A new robust assessment system has been introduced but it is still too early to fully see the impact of this on pupil progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is a strength of the school. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that appropriate knowledge and skills are delivered for all subjects. The focus on mathematics and English is supported by work in science, art, music, geography, history and physical education. Leaders aim to ensure that the curriculum is highly practical and engaging. For example, inspectors observed a mixed history and art lesson that developed children's skills in observation while they were learning the historical vocabulary for a new topic on castles. Parents and pupils also commented on the wide range of learning opportunities across the curriculum. One parent said that their child was 'making excellent progress within the curriculum as well as developing as a small person'. Pupils spoke excitedly about their love of learning outdoors in the 'Forest School', commenting that they find it 'highly engaging' and see it as a 'real strength' of the school.
- A wide range of additional clubs and activities enhance pupils' personal and social development. These range from keep fit classes to more traditional activities, such as football. Most of the pupils spoken to by inspectors had taken part in some form of extra-curricular activity, which had helped them build their self-confidence and widen their experiences.

Governance of the school

- Governors are enthusiastic and passionate about the school. They visit the school frequently. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, so they know the issues to be tackled.

- Since the previous inspection, governors have undertaken a review of how the governing body works and implemented an action plan to address areas for improvement. The governing body was reorganised and new governors were recruited, based on the skills they could offer. Governors undertake various training programmes to support them to execute their duties effectively and draw on a wide range of services to help them to develop further. They attend training, for example in safeguarding, and this enables them to keep abreast of guidance and what the school is aiming to achieve. Consequently, governors now have the skills needed to hold leaders to account effectively.
- Governors work alongside other leaders to gain first-hand knowledge of how the school runs on a day-to-day basis. They receive high-quality information from school leaders, which they use to inform their work. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions or take decisive actions when they have concerns.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures and policies are in place. Leaders ensure that training is up to date for staff and for members of the governing body. Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. The three designated safeguarding leaders undertake regular training and are diligent in ensuring that vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need from outside agencies. Leaders have ensured that appropriate checks are made on the suitability of adults working at the school.
- Staff know pupils well. They work closely with other agencies to support pupils' welfare and have developed a highly supportive team approach within the school. The creation of the 'Safe and Sound' group promotes pupil well-being and has helped to develop an open and transparent culture of safeguarding across the school. Consequently, pupils and families can confidently access local services for early help, ensuring that they receive appropriate support.
- Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire or in writing feel that their children are safe and praised the quality of care provided by the school. Parents described the effective way the school has supported their children, and one praised staff for their letting their child 'flourish under their care'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders and staff have created a happy, purposeful environment, which helps pupils to become independent and confident learners. Staff have built positive relationships with pupils that enable pupils to develop self-esteem and resilience. As a result, attitudes to learning are strong across the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss their learning and work collaboratively in a wide range of lessons. Where teaching is having the most positive impact, teachers display good subject knowledge, and this enables teachers to question, probe and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers set consistently high expectations of what

each pupil can achieve, including most-able and disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, almost all pupils make good progress and challenge themselves.

- Teachers use a range of resources to support learning, including the effective use of technology to enhance their explanations. Teachers are ably assisted by effective support staff who ensure that pupils are supported but also develop independence in their learning.
- Leaders and teachers have developed an appropriate assessment system to help guide their work. This underpins learning across the school and helps to ensure that most pupils have work set at challenging and appropriate levels. Leaders routinely use information to target pupils and provide support where it is needed. However, at times the most able pupils are given work that does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel that they make good progress in mathematics. These views are reflected in the inspection findings, as mathematics is now a strength in the school. In most year groups, teachers promote skills in mathematics systematically, providing pupils with opportunities to develop their mental and written skills. Pupils' work is well matched to their needs and develops reasoning, thinking and problem solving skills well.
- Pupils write well because teachers are now skilled at demonstrating and explaining different styles of writing. Pupils write at length and for a wide variety of purposes. Teachers encourage pupils to use ambitious vocabulary to make their writing interesting and provide pupils with opportunities to draft and edit their work. Pupils commented that they find this process useful in improving their own writing as they now understand their own strengths as writers and how they can develop further.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read regularly at home and with staff in school. Reading for enjoyment is well promoted throughout the school. Leaders rightly identified that reading is not yet as strong as writing. Leaders know that younger pupils have a good grasp of phonic skills, but that wider comprehension is weaker. Inspectors could see evidence of the impact of leaders' strategies to improve pupils' comprehension. For example, pupils in Year 1 were being stretched through probing questioning that deepened their understanding of the texts that they were reading. Another group in Year 4 was selecting and retrieving relevant facts and using them to create newspaper reports.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection so that it is now typically good. Teachers and leaders spoke of the positive learning culture that is now evident across the school. Teachers are encouraged to undertake a wide variety of training, and there are increasing opportunities to share good practice. Leaders are aware of the need to provide further development for teachers who are new to their roles, such as in lower key stage 2, in order to continue to improve the quality of teaching in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils talked happily and confidently about their school. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities offered, including 'Forest School', art and physical education.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe, and said that they feel safe. Pupils spoke about the work of the e-safety officers, a small group of pupils who have had training in online safety. They have led assemblies, sharing their work and raising awareness of how to stay safe across the school. Health and safety are promoted throughout the curriculum. Inspectors observed Nursery children learning about dental health and children in Reception playing in role as police officers, directing and helping others to stay safe.
- Pupils said that incidents of bullying almost never happen, but if issues do arise they are confident that they will be dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils are happy to talk to staff about their concerns. Pupils show a good understanding of the different types of bullying and spoke confidently about how they are aware that everyone is different: 'We all like to do different things.'
- Staff are very aware of the social and emotional needs of pupils and they endeavour to provide high-quality care. There are a few pupils who have difficulty managing their feelings and emotions, and struggle in lessons and on the playground. To address this, the school provides calming activities, for example in the nurture groups. Safeguarding is also supported through the school's 'Safe and Sound' group. Consequently, pupils learn effective strategies to help them to regulate their feelings and emotions.
- The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural education extremely well. Pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths beyond their immediate experience is very well developed. For example, pupils spoke with confidence of a debate that they had after listening to news stories about recent terrorist acts.
- Pupils attend school regularly, attendance for all pupils is above the national average and persistent absence is low. Pupils are very clear about the importance of their education. Pupils are keen to learn and most pupils show great levels of concentration.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that most pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. There were some minor incidents of low-level disruption observed by inspectors, but these were quickly and effectively dealt with by staff members. Pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties are managed well, with effective support.
- Pupils demonstrate great respect for the adults in school and for each other. Playtimes are friendly occasions, when pupils play happily together. Pupils in Year 1 talked at length about their friendship groups and the games they enjoy. Pupils told inspectors that playtimes are normally friendly. When arguments do happen, pupils know which adults to approach to help them resolve their differences.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the survey, or who spoke to inspectors, agreed or strongly agreed that children are well looked after and behave well in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, most pupils at key stage 2, including disadvantaged pupils, made good progress in writing and mathematics. Progress was slower in reading. At key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving expected standards was broadly in line with the national averages in writing and mathematics but was, again, less strong in reading. Leaders have acted decisively to address the possible underperformance in reading. In both key stages, the school's own assessment information shows positive improvements in reading outcomes in most year groups.
- Although overall performance in reading is not as good as in writing and mathematics, the proportion of pupils passing the national phonics screening check in Year 1 has steadily increased to be above the national average for the last two years. Inspectors found that decoding and word recognition were strengths in pupils' reading, when listening to pupils read across the school, and these improvements are now having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills and enjoyment.
- During their time in key stage 1, most current pupils are making good progress. Teachers build carefully on the knowledge, understanding and skills that children gain in the early years. The school's assessment information shows that a good proportion of pupils are working at the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and an increasing number of pupils are working at the higher standards. This was particularly noticeable in Year 1, where many pupils are working at a greater depth, building on their strong progress from the early years foundation stage.
- Pupils continue to make progress in key stage 2, and this is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. As a result of a legacy of weaker teaching from previous years, pupils in lower key stage 2 are still catching up. Leaders have identified this and have acted with staff changes and professional development for new staff. Progress in these year groups had slowed, but recent assessments show improvements in all subjects. Information from the school and book scrutiny support this. As a result, pupils are now attaining well in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they reach Year 6, although the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards in reading, writing and maths is still variable.
- Through careful tracking, targeted teaching and careful planning of next steps, the school ensures that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress over time and achieve well.
- Leaders track the progress and attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics for most groups of pupils carefully. However, although pupils' learning in other subjects, such as science, history and geography, is tracked to monitor attainment, it is not yet used to maximise the progress that pupils make in these subjects.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils are strengthening. However, inspectors' scrutiny of school information and of pupils' books showed that work set for these pupils varies in the level of challenge. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their learning and work at greater depth, which limits progress.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership in the early years is outstanding. Leaders are highly skilled and motivated. They have developed a strong provision that is specifically targeted to meet the needs of all the children and celebrate all children as individuals. Leaders are committed to high expectations and have communicated a clear vision to staff and parents about what good learning should look like.
- Children enter with starting points that are typical for their age. Children make rapid progress through the early years, and a larger proportion of children achieve a good level of development than the national average. As a result, children are very well prepared socially, emotionally and academically for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Staff make accurate, robust assessments and use these to plan careful next steps for children's learning. Staff know their children extremely well and have forged strong relationships with all children. Leaders and staff make incisive evaluations of what is working well and what is not. Where specific goals and targets are not being achieved, extra activities are quickly planned and provided to address this. Consequently, children make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Children work well together and are engrossed in their learning. They are highly engaged and inquisitive learners. This is because of the good emphasis that adults place on developing children's personal, social and behavioural skills.
- The school admits children from the age of two. Leaders have created a stimulating learning environment that is suitably resourced for these children. Routines have been established very quickly and high expectations have been set. Consequently, children develop high levels of independence and confidence. For example, children were captivated by others performing songs on a stage in the outdoor area. Children actively took on the roles of selling tickets to others who sat and listened for a sustained period, supporting and applauding performers. The children attending this provision are on target to be very well prepared for their Nursery and Reception years.
- The foundations for successful learning are firmly established throughout Nursery and Reception. There is a calm environment where children are taught to play together, such as through careful modelling and demonstration by well-skilled adults. Staff talk constantly as a model for children to follow and copy, not only supporting play but promoting confidence through praise. As a result, children develop good language skills and are confident in using a wide range of vocabulary.
- Children receive tremendous support from well-trained adults who have benefited from high-quality professional development activities. Leaders have shared skills and coached staff to ensure that they support children well. The curriculum is stimulating and children are constantly busy. For example, the children were busy selling real fruit and vegetables in the outside shop and naming and learning their letter sounds in the construction area. One group was having great fun using water pistols, playing 'tricky word splat' – a game designed to test their reading of words that could not be decoded using phonics. One girl took the lead as the teacher, modelling how to play the game and encouraging others to use their word recognition skills accurately.

- Funding is targeted to ensure that the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well met. As a result, these pupils make good progress in their early school life. For example, children have made good progress with their speech and language difficulties because of staff expertise, high expectations and a relentless drive that focuses on small-step progress.
- Leaders ensure that there are excellent links with parents and other early years providers, such as alternative feeder nurseries or childminders, from before children start school or Nursery and throughout their time in the setting. Leaders have ensured that transition is highly effective and are proud that they build on every individual child's needs so that all children have a positive start to life in the school.
- Children's safety, well-being and welfare are given a high priority. Throughout the early years, the correct staffing ratios and qualifications are maintained, all welfare requirements are fully met and safeguarding practices are secure.

School details

Unique reference number	111198
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10032183

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Mellor
Headteacher	Angela Grace
Telephone number	01925 726558
Website	www.penketh-south.warrington.sch.uk
Email address	penkethsouth_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly the same as the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The school works within a cluster of other local schools to provide training opportunities to staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons, covering all classes in the school. The headteacher accompanied the lead inspector on observations and learning walks as part of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met a representative from the local authority.
- One inspector talked to a group of pupils on the second day of the inspection, and the inspection team talked to pupils in lessons and at break about their learning.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school. Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading and talked to them about their reading. Inspectors examined the quality of work in a wide range of books. They discussed pupils' work and their learning with them in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and information relating to pupil achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 46 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and 45 free text responses.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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