

Allanson Street Primary School

Gaskell Street, Parr, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 1PL

Inspection dates 19 to 20 March 2019

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders provide a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum which encourages pupils to follow the school's motto: 'we are the best that we can be'.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school. However, whole-school improvement plans lack specific criteria by which leaders can measure success.
- Teaching is good. Pupils develop as enthusiastic learners with skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Staff check on pupils' learning regularly. Teachers do not always use this information to plan learning which matches pupils' abilities.
- Knowledgeable governors provide a good balance of challenge and support for leaders and staff.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils feel safe in school and learn how to keep themselves safe outside school.
- The school's experienced pastoral team provides valuable support for pupils' social and emotional health and well-being.

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils read regularly and with good understanding.
- Pupils learn to write for a range of different purposes. They develop their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Some pupils lack confidence and accuracy when using these skills in their independent writing.
- Changes to how teachers develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are starting to have an impact and standards are rising.
- Leaders have taken positive steps to improve attendance, but some pupils miss school regularly, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Children in the early years enjoy their learning and make good progress. However, the activities that staff plan for children's independent play sometimes lack challenge.
- Children in the early years do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their early writing skills.



Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening improvement planning so that it enables leaders and governors to check accurately whether improvements are on track across the course of the year.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers use checks on pupils' learning to plan activities which precisely match pupils' abilities
 - in mathematics, embedding recent changes to developing pupils' reasoning skills
 - in their independent writing, ensuring that pupils use their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately.
- Improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Improve the progress of children in the early years by:
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills
 - ensuring that activities in independent play areas challenge children to think deeply and achieve their best.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The experienced headteacher has effectively sustained her vision for a positive and caring learning atmosphere underpinned by the school's values. The school motto of 'be the best that you can be' permeates the work of the school. Staff and governors are aspirational and want pupils to achieve well and to experience a broad, rich and engaging curriculum.
- Staff are enthusiastic and hardworking. They are keen to further improve their teaching. Leaders have addressed the fall in outcomes for pupils by the end of Year 6 in 2016. They provide staff with opportunities to work collaboratively with each other and with professionals from other schools to share and develop their skills. As a result, standards have risen across the school, including in the early years and in phonics.
- Leaders have provided a bright, warm and welcoming environment. A wealth of attractive display boards celebrate pupils' work across the curriculum, inform pupils about keeping safe and healthy and raise pupils' aspirations. For example, leaders encourage pupils to think about their future careers and to work hard to achieve their goals.
- Leaders know the school well. They analyse pupils' progress in detail and use this information to plan training for staff and to ensure that pupils falling behind receive additional support. However, leaders do not make best use of their analyses to inform their detailed plans for school improvement. Some of these plans lack sharpness and do not include measurable targets.
- Leaders and governors are aware that some aspects of the school's work, such as improving pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics, are still developing. Senior leaders have provided comprehensive training for staff in teaching mathematics and this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- Leaders have been effective in improving reading and standards have risen. Leaders ensure that pupils read regularly and with understanding. The school has invested in a range of online reading resources and these have helped to improve pupils' reading skills.
- The leadership of English has been effective in ensuring that pupils' progress in writing has improved. The subject leader has worked alongside staff to better embed aspects of spelling, punctuation and grammar into a systematic way of teaching writing. Leaders recognise that, in some classes, pupils need further support and confidence to apply these skills consistently in their independent writing.
- Leaders for subjects other than mathematics and English check teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills develop across the curriculum. Leaders have improved the school's long-term curriculum plans, mapping the knowledge and vocabulary that they expect pupils to acquire in different subjects as they move through the school. This improved planning is raising standards.



- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used well to benefit the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils. There is a wide range of learning support for these pupils and staff enable them to participate in a broad range of activities. The school's pastoral team provides a wealth of support to develop pupils' social and emotional resilience and to address their well-being. This breadth of well-tailored support is helping this group of pupils to close any gaps between their achievement and that of other groups. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. However, some pupils have high persistent absence.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides strong leadership. Pupils are precisely assessed to identify any barriers to their progress. Staff provide a wide range of interventions and strategies to remove these barriers. Regular meetings with parents, carers and, when needed, other agencies and professionals, are used well to share information about pupils' learning. Provision is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is having maximum impact. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. A small number have high persistent absence.
- Leaders use the sport premium to build pupils' skills, confidence and teamwork. For example, there are coaching sessions from sports specialists who work with pupils and develop the skills of staff. This is helping pupils to acquire better skills in a very wide range of sports, including hockey, cricket and badminton. Pupils in key stage 2 have regular opportunities to improve their swimming skills. The school participates with success in many sports competitions and events, raising pupils' skills and their enjoyment of sport.
- Leaders have planned and embedded a broad and engaging curriculum for pupils, which includes religious education and personal, social and health education. Pupils develop a good understanding of other religions, including Islam and Judaism. British values are an integral part of the curriculum. For example, a whole-school project on London, including the Houses of Parliament, developed pupils' understanding of democracy. Teachers ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well integrated into the curriculum.
- The curriculum includes a cultural pathway, where pupils enjoy a range of experiences, such as visits to theatres, art galleries and museums. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential trip to York, visiting a range of cultural sites and places of interest. This wealth of opportunities fosters pupils' understanding and appreciation of their local and wider community.
- Leaders have established close and friendly relationships with parents. Parents have a very positive view of the school. They value the close communication between school and home and appreciate that any concerns they have are listened to by staff and are addressed.

Governance of the school

■ The governing body is dedicated, committed and knowledgeable. It shares the leadership team's aspiration and determination for every pupil to be well prepared for the next stage of education.



- The governing body has an accurate knowledge of the strengths of the school and of areas for improvement. Governors receive detailed information from the headteacher and other leaders about pupils' progress and attainment. However, this detailed information is not regularly used to set measurable targets in the school's plans for improvement. Governors ensure that staff training is closely matched to the school's improvement priorities, including developing staff skills in teaching reasoning in mathematics.
- Governors make regular and detailed checks on the progress of different groups of pupils, including those who have SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors monitor the school's budget carefully. They ask pertinent questions about the difference that additional funding makes to pupils' outcomes and staff development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in school. Appropriate checks are made on visitors when they arrive at the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' safety is a priority and staff are vigilant. Leaders make sure staff receive appropriate and regular training to identify any signs of possible danger or potential abuse. Leaders have created a safe and caring culture in which pupils feel very confident that they have someone to talk with if they are worried. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said they feel safe in school.
- Through the curriculum, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider community. For example, pupils learn about road safety, how to keep themselves safe from knife crime and how to cycle safely on roads.
- The procedures for reporting any incidents or concerns are very clear and are understood by staff. Leaders effectively engage with parents and external agencies to ensure that all pupils are supported and safe.
- Leaders keep a close check on pupils' attendance. Through home visits and working with other professionals, leaders ensure that no pupil is in danger of becoming missing from education.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff provide a positive learning environment with excellent relationships between the pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to contribute to class discussions. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard and try their best.
- Teachers know pupils well. Staff build pupils' confidence by providing after-school clubs, including in mathematics and English. The school's system to check on pupils' progress is detailed and ensures that teachers and teaching assistants provide timely



and appropriate support, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils make good progress.

- Teachers plan opportunities to check pupils' knowledge and skills at the start of lessons and new topics. They use this information to identify where pupils need additional practice and support. Occasionally, teachers do not use this information precisely enough, and they plan work which is too easy or too difficult. This slows pupils' progress in some lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics is strengthening because staff are sharing effective practice. Pupils across the school develop fluency and confidence in number, and their written calculations are accurate. Leaders identified that pupils were less confident in their mathematical reasoning. Staff now provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to think deeply about their learning and explain their reasoning. These changes are still embedding, but are starting to have a positive impact. As a result, pupils are becoming more confident and successful in solving mathematical problems.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good knowledge of how to teach phonics. They plan regular and precise activities to develop pupils' reading skills. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points and read with confidence and fluency. Pupils are less confident when applying their phonics skills to their independent writing.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school and pupils read regularly and for pleasure. Teachers carefully choose a range of books to read in class. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy visiting the school library and local library. Staff provide an after-school reading club for parents and their children to enjoy books. Wholeschool book weeks are planned by staff to enthuse and engage pupils in reading.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop longer pieces of writing, both in English and across a range of subjects and topics. The teaching of writing is effective in consolidating most pupils' understanding of the correct application of spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, some pupils lack the confidence and knowledge to apply their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills accurately in their independent writing.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good across the curriculum. Leaders in subjects including art, history and geography work with teachers to develop their skills and improve teaching and learning. For example, the art subject leader provided training for staff on developing pupils' drawing skills.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the key vocabulary pupils need to know as part of their learning. For example, in a Year 4 history lesson, pupils learned the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, such as 'controversial', 'monarch' and 'neutral'. This helps develop pupils' knowledge and understanding across different areas of the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare



- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare lie at the heart of the school's nurturing and inclusive ethos. Each morning, pupils and their parents are warmly welcomed into school by staff. Parents have the opportunity to share any concerns and these are quickly dealt with.
- Leaders plan a programme of lessons and assemblies which develop pupils' respect for other cultures and religions. Pupils take part in a wide range of fundraising events and develop as caring and considerate individuals.
- The experienced pastoral team provides a valuable programme of support for small groups and individual pupils to develop their resilience, social skills and confidence. Staff provide a wide range of support for families, for instance in accompanying parents and pupils to meetings with health professionals. Pupils value opportunities to talk with adults at difficult times, for example following bereavement.
- 'Worry boxes' are placed around the school. Pupils can write down any concerns that they have, and these are addressed by staff.
- Leaders provide times for reflection and prayer. Pupils value times for quiet contemplation and reflection.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' resilience and confidence are built into the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy residential trips, taking part in activities including climbing and raft building.
- In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners and listen respectfully to adults and their peers. Pupils are keen to answer questions, and contribute well to class discussions. The majority of pupils persevere and work with sustained concentration. Occasionally, when activities do not fully challenge their range of abilities, pupils become distracted and lack focus.
- Pupils develop as active and caring citizens by taking part in a range of leadership opportunities. The very active school council encourages pupils to care for the environment by recycling and reducing waste. Pupils took part in a community litter picking activity as part of their environmental work.
- Leaders make sure that pupils lead healthy lives in school and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils keep active through the wide range of sports provision. Pupils have a good understanding about the importance of healthy eating and of the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is not outstanding because too many pupils are persistently absent and lose out on learning.
- Very positive relationships exist between adults and pupils. Pupils are polite, well mannered and very welcoming to visitors. Parents, staff and pupils agree that pupils behave well.



- Pupils report that any incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with quickly by adults. Pupils spoke very confidently about how staff help them to resolve any disagreements. The school's pastoral team provides support for pupils with additional behavioural needs. When needed, school leaders work with other agencies to help manage the small number of pupils with challenging behaviour.
- Older pupils are role models to younger pupils, taking on a wide range of leadership activities, including being guardian angels and playground leaders. These pupils help to ensure that others move calmly around the school and play well together. Staff provide a wide range of equipment and activities to keep pupils engaged and active at lunchtimes.
- Pupils value their education and the majority of pupils attend school very regularly. High attendance is celebrated, and pupils are keen to reach their attendance targets. However, some pupils are persistently absent from school, including some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. School leaders work closely with parents and with other agencies to improve the attendance of these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment at the expected and higher standard in reading has risen in recent years at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading and leave the school with standards in line with national averages. Across the school, pupils develop confidence, fluency and understanding in their reading. They learn to value reading and read for pleasure.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in 2018 was higher than in 2017 and was close to the national average. Current pupils are making good progress in developing their phonics skills and knowledge and are using them effectively in their reading. Pupils falling behind are given additional support and this has a good impact in helping them to catch up.
- From low starting points, pupils make good progress in their writing at key stage 1 and pupils' attainment is improving over time. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who leave school with writing at the expected standard has been close to the national average in recent years. Pupils write for a range of purposes and develop an increasing awareness of how to use ambitious vocabulary to make their writing interesting to read. Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In some classes, pupils do not apply these skills in their independent writing. This limits the progress that some pupils make.
- In mathematics, pupils' attainment at the expected standard at the end of Year 2 has risen over time and is now close to the national average. Pupils make good progress across key stage 1 in their mathematics. In key stage 2, attainment at the end of Year 6 fell last year. Leaders identified that, across the school, pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics needed further development. Leaders have taken steps to improve mathematics teaching and this has had a positive impact on progress. Pupils are developing the ability to tackle a range of problems successfully. However, in some



classes, pupils are less confident when trying to solve tricky problems as their reasoning skills are less well developed.

- Work in pupils' books and the school's information show that current pupils make good progress across different subjects and year groups. However, in some lessons, teachers plan work which is too easy or too difficult for pupils and this stops pupils making stronger progress.
- In science, pupils make good progress. They develop the skills to work scientifically, planning scientific enquiries to answer questions. Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' knowledge of scientific vocabulary as part of their learning.
- Music specialists teach pupils to play and sing, developing their skills and confidence. Pupils have opportunities to learn to play a range of musical instruments. Vocal coaches support pupils with a talent in singing.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points. Leaders use additional funding to support these pupils well. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school. Leaders' checks on pupils' progress, and the work in the books of disadvantaged pupils, show that they make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including gardening, art and sport, enhance pupils' skills, knowledge and enjoyment of learning. Pupils leave the school as enthusiastic learners, keen to contribute to society and ready for their next stage of education.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have provided a safe and nurturing learning environment for children in Nursery and Reception. Children settle quickly and play cooperatively and with sustained concentration, chatting happily in the different areas of learning. High staff-to-child ratios mean that children across the setting work in small groups. Adults support children skilfully in their communication and language, questioning and modelling talk to help children develop their skills.
- Leaders gather a range of information from other providers and parents to make sure that children make a smooth and successful start to school. This helps staff build an accurate picture of any additional needs children may have. Relationships between parents and school are strong. Parents feel very welcome in school and receive regular updates about their children's learning.
- Most children join Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. As a result of well-planned learning opportunities, children make good progress from their starting points.
- The children starting Reception who have not attended the school Nursery typically have skills and knowledge below those typical for their age, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teaching in Reception is good, and this is reflected in children's good



- progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is below the national average, but is improving.
- Leaders ensure that children make a smooth transition to Year 1. Children visit their new classrooms and staff share detailed information about children's learning.
- Leadership is effective. Leaders have a good understanding of children's levels of learning. They have accurately identified strengths and areas to develop in the early years, including improving children's skills in writing.
- Leaders provide a range of additional support for disadvantaged children and children with SEND. Well-planned learning tasks are delivered by skilled staff and these closely match children's learning needs.
- The Nursery and Reception classrooms are well resourced, attractive and engaging. Cosy and inviting reading areas encourage children to enjoy books. The outdoor area provides a range of opportunities for children to climb, balance and explore. During the inspection, children were enjoying cooking in the newly installed mud kitchen.
- In Nursery, staff provide a range of activities for children to develop their fine motor skills, including making shapes from play dough. In Reception, children practise their handwriting regularly. Children's workbooks show that they use their developing phonics skills to sound out words. However, teachers do not plan challenging activities for children to develop their writing skills as part of ongoing activities both inside and outside in Nursery and Reception. As a result, children, particularly boys, do not make the strong progress of which they are capable in writing.
- Teachers plan daily phonics lessons to ensure that children develop their early reading skills. Phonics teaching is good in early years. Staff provide well-structured lessons and guide groups well, questioning children to check their learning. Staff listen to children read regularly and give parents additional guidance to support their children with reading.
- Through effective questioning and discussion, staff extend children's thinking. They develop children's language skills by engaging them in conversation and sharing books with them. Teachers use a range of vocabulary to extend children's learning and understanding.
- Leaders plan engaging learning, but activities planned for children's independent play sometimes lack focus and challenge. Adults do not always move children's learning on well enough. As a result, some children do not make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Staff in the early years keep their skills and knowledge up to date through regular training provided by leaders, including safeguarding, teaching mathematics and writing.
- Welfare requirements are met. The provision is well staffed and regular risk assessments are undertaken. It is a safe environment and all statutory school policies are in place, ensuring children are safe and feel safe.







School details

Unique reference number 104758

Local authority St Helens

Inspection number 10086857

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school Primary

School category Community

Age range of pupils 3 to 11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 470

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair Angela Lashley

Headteacher Patricia Farnell

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Date of previous inspection Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND support is above the national average. The proportion of those who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.



Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and held formal and informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and tracking records with leaders.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders, four governors, including the chair of the governing body, the designated and deputy safeguarding leaders and the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND. Inspectors met with the school's pastoral team. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and with the virtual school headteacher.
- The inspectors met with parents at the school gate to seek their views.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents, pupils' tracking information, subject leaders' documents, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and various records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Peach	Ofsted Inspector
Tina Cleugh	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Beard	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector



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