

Eastway Primary School

Rossall Road, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside CH46 8TA

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of education has declined since the previous inspection. Until recently, leaders did not do enough to stem the deterioration in pupils' progress and attainment.
- Weaknesses in teaching over time have led to gaps in pupils' learning, especially in key stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- While teaching is improving strongly, it does not as yet consistently meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Some of the most able pupils in key stage 2 are not challenged to reach the standards of which they are capable in writing and mathematics.
- Some of the less able pupils, including those in mainstream classes with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not provided with work or support that matches their needs.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the early years has remained static over the last few years and has been below the national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies in the early years. Adults are not deployed to the best effect when supporting children, including those with SEND.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership is good. Since taking up post in September 2017, the headteacher has brought about significant improvements. Progress in all subjects is improving for current pupils.
- Middle leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- There have been extensive changes in governance. Governors question leaders well to promote school improvement.
- Provision in the resource base for pupils with SEND is strong. Staff know pupils well and are adept at catering for their needs.
- The school's redesigned curriculum is setting high expectations for current pupils' progress and attainment.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' behaviour. Consequently, exclusions have fallen and attendance has improved.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils' personal development is good.
- Staff are vigilant and keep pupils safe from harm. Pupils feel safe because of the high levels of care from staff.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment through more effective teaching and support, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the learning activities pupils complete are matched more closely to their abilities
 - enabling the most able pupils to achieve the success of which they are capable across a range of subjects by providing them with sufficient challenge
 - ensuring that pupils with SEND in mainstream classes, and some of the less able pupils, consolidate their understanding and skills before they move on to new ideas and concepts
 - helping pupils, especially those in key stage 2, to overcome gaps in their learning, particularly in relation to their basic spelling, grammar and punctuation skills.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years so that children make stronger progress and a greater proportion are ready to access the key stage 1 curriculum by ensuring that:
 - assessments are more consistently linked to children's next steps in learning
 - adults in the preschool and Nursery have the skills and knowledge to support children's learning
 - adults raise their expectations of children's behaviour so that learning is not disrupted
 - leaders deploy adults more effectively to support children with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in September 2017, the headteacher has led the successful drive to stem the worrying decline in pupils' progress and attainment. Under her strong and focused leadership, Eastway is on the road to recovery. The groundwork laid over the last 18 months is ensuring that teaching is improving and that the progress current pupils make is much stronger than it has been in the past. Furthermore, pupils' attendance has improved. The reduction in fixed-term exclusions is testament to leaders' work to promote pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. These improvements have been secured against a backdrop of considerable staff turnover and many changes to the membership of the governing body. Leaders' success to date demonstrates their strong capacity to continue the school's improvement.
- Leaders, staff and governors are united in their ambitious vision for improvement. Morale is high. The trust and confidence that staff have in the headteacher are evident in the consistent approach they have adopted to ensure that new ways of teaching are in place in all classrooms.
- One of the things that contributed to the decline in the school's effectiveness was leaders' slow response to the increased demands of the national curriculum, which was implemented in 2014. This has led to gaps in pupils' learning and a decline in the progress pupils have made by the end of Year 6. Leaders have tackled this weakness effectively to ensure that pupils learn at an age-appropriate level across different subjects. The result has been a significant upturn in the progress made by pupils.
- Leaders have effectively tackled the weakest teaching in the school. The leadership team has created a climate of improvement by providing staff with opportunities to develop their teaching skills. For example, staff training has led to a more systematic approach to the teaching of writing. This means that pupils are building well on their skills and understanding. Staff feel valued and appreciate the development they receive. All of the staff who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they were proud to be part of the school.
- Middle leaders – many of whom are new to their roles – have a clear understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have made a positive difference to the quality of teaching in different subjects, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are prepared positively for life in modern Britain. They have designed the curriculum to develop well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge. Leaders have ensured that pupils gain a strong understanding of others' views and beliefs. There are a variety of extra-curricular activities which help to build pupils' confidence and fitness, for example clubs for Judo and gymnastics.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision across the school. The SENCo has ensured that mechanisms to support the identification of pupils' needs are robust. Additional funding for SEND is now being used effectively to ensure that pupils benefit from specialist support and assessments that identify their individual needs well. There is highly effective support provided for pupils who attend the special resource base for social and communication needs. However, leaders have not replicated this in mainstream

classes where some pupils with SEND – and some lower-ability pupils – are not enabled to fully consolidate their learning. This means that some pupils do not understand what they have been learning before moving on to other work.

- The school has received support from a national leader of education on behalf of the local authority. This additional expertise has provided leaders with effective quality assurance of their plans to develop the school.
- The parents and carers with whom inspectors spoke – and those responding to Ofsted’s online survey Parent View – hold a common view that there have been positive improvements at the school since the appointment of the new headteacher. Leaders have put in place parent representatives for each class so that parents’ views can directly inform leaders’ actions to improve the school.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, there have been wholesale changes in governance. Almost all governors are new to their roles. Governors have a wealth of experience. Some have been appointed because of their skills and knowledge of education. This means that they have been quick to gain an accurate understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses.
- The recent minutes of the governing body meetings show a high level of questioning which gets to the heart of curriculum matters. Governors display a clear understanding of the progress that pupils make. They ask relevant – and often incisive – questions to promote the school’s improvement.
- Governors have put in place improved arrangements to ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used to more effectively target pupils’ needs. The use of the physical education and sport funding is ensuring that pupils participate in a wide range of competitive and non-competitive sports.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff receive regular safeguarding training, which is supplemented by weekly updates in staff meetings. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Leaders and staff know the potential local risks to pupils’ safety. They are vigilant in spotting issues and diligent in reporting their concerns.
- There is a systematic procedure – known by all staff – for reporting a concern about a pupil. This ensures that any concerns are acted upon swiftly. As a result, pupils and families receive the help they need.
- Leaders ensure that the register of pre-employment checks carried out on staff and governors is well maintained.
- Leaders engage well with families to ensure that pupils are safe from harm. Leaders work well with a range of other agencies. Pupils and parents feel supported because of the early help that they receive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders' approach to the design of the curriculum has structured pupils' learning well. Teachers have a better awareness of how pupils progress in different subjects. This is leading to marked improvements in the quality of teaching across the school. The effect of this is evident for younger pupils who have been less exposed to weaker teaching over time. This is ensuring that there are firm foundations in place for the future. However, some pupils – especially those in upper key stage 2 – continue to live with lingering gaps in their knowledge and skills. This is exemplified in pupils' written work, where they make simple errors in their use of punctuation.
- Teachers' expectations have been raised. The new curriculum has ensured that teachers are planning activities that are more appropriate for pupils' age. However, teachers' skills in matching tasks to different ability groups remain variable. The work in pupils' writing and mathematics books shows that some of the less able pupils – including those pupils with SEND – do not have a secure understanding of their learning before moving on to new work. Some of the most able pupils are not challenged well enough to make the progress of which they would otherwise be capable.
- Teachers have adopted a more structured approach to the way in which they teach phonics in key stage 1. This is helping pupils – especially younger ones – to become more competent readers. Staff match texts well to the different abilities of pupils to help them to improve. However, older pupils' lack of knowledge hinders their fluency and understanding because they stumble over common words. This shows that the teaching of reading has previously not been effective in meeting the needs of pupils currently in key stage 2.
- Provision in key stage 1 reflects the recent improvements in teaching and learning well. Teachers have ensured that pupils' written work shows good progress and a greater accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation. In key stage 2, staff have focused on ensuring that pupils use descriptive vocabulary to improve the tone and structure of their work. Pupils are gaining confidence in their writing skills. However, in key stage 2, teaching has previously not been good enough to address the inaccuracies in pupils' spelling and punctuation. This is currently limiting the progress of some pupils.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics mean that teachers are now enabling pupils to build their fluency using number. Staff question pupils well so they develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Staff plan interesting topics to really interest pupils. Teachers require pupils practise their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects. However, while pupils gain an overview of all the subjects in the national curriculum, their work sometimes demonstrates a lack of depth in their learning. For example, although pupils develop their investigative skills in science, they are not taught sufficiently well key scientific concepts.
- In the resource base provision, pupils are supported by knowledgeable staff who understand their needs very well. Staff set a calm atmosphere which helps pupils to settle quickly and learning proceeds without interruption. Activities are matched to pupils' specific needs and they – in turn – focus well on their work. Pupils are happy, which enables them to integrate well into mainstream classes. The work in pupils'

books shows a strong emphasis on developing pupils' life skills. The topics they study link well with developing their understanding of personal safety and the world around them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. They are developing greater confidence and are becoming effective learners.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. This creates a warm and nurturing environment which supports pupils' learning. Pupils feel that staff listen to their opinions and suggestions.
- Interesting topics help promote well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in Year 4, pupils research local history to understand their own culture. They also discuss the moral implications of issues – such as the slave trade – to gain a better understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They understand the effects of bullying because of a range of activities they undertake, such as anti-bullying week. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens, and staff are quick to address any signs of potential bullying.
- Pupils have a good understanding of and respect for difference, including those related to SEND. They know that it is wrong to discriminate. Pupils have noted a dramatic reduction in the use of derogatory language in school, including racist and homophobic name-calling. They say such incidents are rare. They know how offensive such language is because of the effective way in which staff promote pupils' understanding about stereotyping, tolerance and respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Disruption to learning is rare.
- There are systematic procedures in place to monitor incidents of behaviour. In 2017/18, there was a spike in fixed-term exclusions because leaders reasserted their expectations for pupils' behaviour. This has been effective in setting the bar for unacceptable behaviour. There has been a reduction in exclusions in the present academic year as a result. Pupils feel that incidents of poor behaviour are tackled well by staff.
- Leaders' effective actions have helped to improve attendance, which is now broadly average. Their success has come about from effectively reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- The behaviour of pupils in the special resource provision is good. Pupils in the mainstream classes have a mature understanding of others' needs and the difficulties

that some pupils have in consistently behaving well. This creates a supportive and nurturing climate for all pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the last three years, at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has been below the national averages. This means that some pupils have not been as well prepared as they should be for their secondary school education. Historic weaknesses in teaching have contributed to pupils' weak achievement over time.
- In key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading is improving because of the steps that leaders have taken over the last year and a half. Current pupils display a secure understanding of what they have read. Frequent reading practice is improving their fluency and comprehension.
- In 2018 – although attainment in writing was lower than that seen nationally at the end of key stage 2 – the progress of pupils was broadly average. Current pupils' writing books in key stage 2 show that they are making steady progress. Although there is still further work needed for some pupils to catch up, more pupils are starting to work at levels that are more appropriate to their age.
- In 2018, progress and attainment in mathematics were below average at the end of key stage 2. The mathematics work of current pupils in key stage 2 shows that they practise basic skills to enable better progress than the published data suggests. A growing number of pupils are becoming increasingly proficient at solving problems and explaining their answers.
- Although improving, the approach to teaching age-related content in writing and mathematics is not challenging some of the most able pupils to achieve the highest standards in key stage 2.
- In 2018, attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was below that seen nationally. However, the progress of current pupils is more positive. Improvements are showing a greater effect in key stage 1 because pupils do not have as many gaps in their prior learning.
- In key stage 1, the improved arrangements for teaching phonics are resulting in pupils having a greater awareness of the letter sounds they have learned. In 2018, pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was close to – but slightly below – the national average.
- Pupils in the special resource base make good progress in their learning, often from low starting points. These pupils are supported well to develop their understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders' actions to improve provision in the early years have not resulted in better outcomes for children. Although many children enter the early years with skills below those typical for their age, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been static over recent years and

remains below the national average. This means that children are not fully equipped to meet the challenges they face when moving into Year 1.

- The new leader for the early years has quickly established an accurate view of what needs to be done. She has started to address the key issues in provision. However, it is still early days.
- The deployment of staff and the quality of their interactions with children do not consistently address the needs of different groups of children. This is particularly true for children with SEND.
- Leaders' use of additional funding for disadvantaged children is making a positive difference to children's communication and language skills. The funding provides specialist support so that children make good progress in this area.
- Those children who attend the two-year-old provision achieved well at the end of their Reception Year in 2018. In the two-year-old provision, activities match children's interests so they show curiosity in their learning. The environment is organised to develop children's key skills. Adults are nurturing and have good relationships with children. However, the quality of questioning and support for children varies in its effectiveness, including when addressing children's behaviour.
- In the Nursery class, adults work well with children during activities but routines are not fully established for some children who recently joined the provision. As such, transitions between activities are slow and some children find it difficult to settle. Where the needs of children are managed well, distractions are minimised, allowing them to focus on their learning. However, the organisation of support for children with SEND hampers progress within the class because some children's behaviour distracts others from their learning. Children enjoy learning and participate well. Children are confident and express their opinions in structured activities. This is because staff model the use of language well.
- The provision in the Reception Year is well organised to meet children's needs and interests. This allows them to develop their skills and knowledge across the different areas of learning. Adults in the Reception class question children well to ensure that they are engaged in their learning. However, provision in the early years requires improvement because too few reach a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year.
- Appropriate arrangements and risk assessments are in place to ensure that staff meet the statutory welfare requirements of the early years, including those of two-year-old children.
- Parents are positive about the provision in the early years. They have opportunities to talk to staff and attend workshops so they can support their children's learning at home. Parents feel their children are safe at school. Children show that they feel safe by exploring the activities that are on offer with confidence.

School details

Unique reference number	105001
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10082062

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Symonds
Headteacher	Mrs Emily Morris
Telephone number	01516 771 235
Website	www.eastway.eschools.co.uk/
Email address	schooloffice@eastway.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2014

Information about this school

- Eastway Primary School is an average-sized primary school with a resource base for up to 16 pupils who have social and communication needs.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than that seen nationally.
- The proportions of pupils who have an education, health and care plan and who receive support for SEND are above average.
- Since the summer term of 2014, a preschool nursery has been established on-site for two-year-olds.
- The school has breakfast and after-school provision run by a private provider. They were not a focus for this inspection.
- The school has been provided with support from a national leader of education on behalf of Wirral local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, including joint observations with the headteacher. They heard pupils read and examined a range of pupils' work in writing, mathematics and subjects across the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 51 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took account of responses from 29 staff who completed the staff survey.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and middle leaders to discuss different aspects of leadership, the design of the school's curriculum and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, such as schemes of work for the curriculum, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's evaluation of its own performance and areas for development. They also looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this related to daily practice and spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Olsson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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