

Wellfield Junior School

Dumber Lane, Ashton on Mersey, Sale. M33 5QX.

Inspection dates 16-17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils do not make enough progress. Those who have extra support with their work because they have special educational needs make slower progress than they should.
- Pupils who benefit from extra funds provided by the government (pupil premium) do not achieve well enough at Wellfield. Their progress is slow and their attainment is lower than other groups of pupils.
- Too much teaching is inadequate because the work set is too easy for pupils particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils are unsure about what to do to improve their work. .
- The headteacher, governors and teachers who lead subjects have too generous a view of pupils' achievement. The main reason for this is because the school does not use assessment information well enough to measure progress.
- The school's plan for the future is not focused clearly enough on the main things that are needed to improve teaching and pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has established a caring school community. Pupils' behaviour and their social, moral and spiritual development are good. They are polite, friendly, respectful and respond well to the range of adults that work at the school.
- Firm action taken by leaders has helped to improve pupils' attendance so that it is above the national average.
- Pupils' progress in the deputy headteacher's class is rapid because teaching is high quality.
- Attainment is rising because of improvements in teaching. As a result, there has been a steady rise in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics.
- Standards in reading have risen more quickly. This is because of effective work by the subject leader for English and improvements in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 13 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and one a joint observation with the deputy headteacher. They observed an assembly and a 'circle time' (a lesson in which pupils learn about personal, social and health education).
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of seven members of the governing body, with a group of teachers who lead subjects, with the special educational needs coordinator who manages support for those pupils who need extra help, and with the deputy headteacher and headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents and carers when pupils were being dropped off in the morning and after the Year 6 class assembly. They spoke with parent governors and took into account letters sent to the inspection team and the 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey: Parent View.
- Inspectors heard ten pupils read from Year 4 and 6. They spoke to 17 pupils who had been chosen by teachers to be on the school council and spoke to pupils informally around the school, for example at break time.
- Inspectors took into account the five staff questionnaires that were completed, the views of lunchtime staff as well as teaching assistants and teachers.
- Inspectors looked at the work of all of the pupils who are looked after by local authorities; work completed by pupils who are more able in each class, those who are supported by additional funding and those who have extra help because of their special educational needs. They also looked at the books of pupils who left the school last year.
- Inspectors took into account evidence from the school's behaviour logs, evidence about how well pupils attend, the school's self-evaluation of its own effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. Inspectors also considered school documents and policies.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Charles Lowry

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Wellfield Junior is average in size when compared with primary schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding from the government through the pupil premium is well below the national average. There are a few pupils who are looked after by local authorities.
- Two years ago the school opened a specialist class for pupils who have different types of autism. The class has eight pupils all of whom are supported by a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils in the school with a statement of special educational needs or who have extra support from staff because they have special educational needs is above the national average. There are a few pupils who have a declared disability.
- Most pupils are White British.
- A very low proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school is very stable which means that very few pupils enter school after the start of Year 3 or before the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the government's floor standard (the minimum expected for attainment and rate of progress). However in 2010 and 2011 the rate of pupils' progress was below minimum expectations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - pupils are more actively involved in their learning in lessons
 - the work pupils complete builds on their existing skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects
 - pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of governors and senior leaders in improving the school by:
 - making sure their view of teaching and what the school does is accurate
 - carrying out the planned review of the effectiveness of the governing body
 - making sure the school's improvement plan concentrates on the main things that will improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Raise pupils' attainment and the speed of their progress from the levels they reach at the end of Year 2 by making sure:
 - pupils who need extra help with their learning receive high-quality teaching
 - leaders including governors, check how well the additional government funding for pupils at risk of not doing so well is spent
 - the gap in standards is closed between pupils who are supported by these additional funds and those who are not.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above average for their age. The representative from the local authority confirmed these results are accurate, for pupils who are now in Years 3 and 4, as did the teachers who lead subjects in the school who have worked with the infant school to check the results. Inspectors' observations of pupils in class and looking at their work confirm that pupils start school well above the national average.
- Although standards attained by Year 6 pupils rose in 2012 to be above average, pupils do not all reach the high levels they are capable of and too many do not reach the expected levels for their age.
- The proportion of pupils attaining higher than expected levels for their age rose significantly in 2012 indicating the success of the school's work to improve the level of challenge for more-able pupils. A few pupils also attained an exceptionally high level for their age.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in their work, including those who are supported with additional government funding. For example more-able pupils who are able to write with skill and confidence in Year 6 are asked to complete very easy worksheets or activities in their topic work which limits their progress. The presentation and quality of work in too many topic books is poor.
- The few pupils who have a declared disability make expected progress. The teachers make appropriate adjustments to the content of lessons to ensure they are fully involved in activities.
- Pupils' reading is improving. The school has introduced the teaching of letter and sounds and pupils across Years 3 and 4 are taught in groups for their own ability. In one session the teacher skilfully used the pupils' mistakes made in the previous lesson as teaching points at the start of the lesson. He then quickly moved onto teaching 'qu' and pupils made good progress in being able to read and write words using 'qu'.
- Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 read well. They read confidently and with expression. They are less able to tackle unfamiliar words by splitting them into sounds but this is because the teaching of letters and sounds has only recently been introduced. Some reading books are not as well matched to pupils' ability.
- Pupils identified as needing extra help with their learning make inadequate progress. This is particularly the case for those who are supported by teaching assistants for most of the time. These pupils do less well than their peers which means that some assistants make little impact on pupils' progress and are not providing value for money.
- Pupils in the dedicated class for autistic pupils make good gains in their personal development, confidence and in their social skills. This is because they are skilfully integrated into whole-school activities such as assembly, break times and theme weeks.
- Since the previous inspection, a greater proportion of pupils make the progress they are expected to. However, there are still too many pupils who do not make enough progress, partly because too many excuses are made for those who speak English as an additional language, those eligible for free school meals or those who have specific learning needs. A few parents and carers who spoke to inspectors said pupils are not 'pushed' and work is too easy.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate in too many lessons. One of the reasons for this is because the teacher is doing most of the work. Pupils have to sit and listen to the teacher for too long, waiting to be chosen to answer a question. Even in reading lessons, the teachers read from the screens as pupils watch passively.
- Teaching assistants are also too often inactive. They sit for sometimes half of the lesson watching the teacher and adding no value to pupils' learning.

- Lessons fail to build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and the work does not match the abilities of pupils. For example, in some reading lessons, despite the fact pupils have widely different reading abilities, they all read the same book and answer the same reading comprehension questions.
- There are improvements; staff have been trained in how to teach letters and sounds and the English leader has led training which has improved the teaching of reading. There has also been a whole-school focus on challenging the more-able pupils. This was successful in 2012 with a higher proportion of pupils attaining above average levels in the English and mathematics tests at the end of Year 6.
- There are exceptions where there is excellent teaching. In a Year 5 mathematics group, the teacher made sure all pupils were actively involved throughout the lesson and time was maximised. The teacher mixed mathematical concepts such as multiplication, division, decimals and place value in tasks that were realistic and meaningful. Similarly in a high quality science lesson, pupils learnt first-hand about air resistance and forces by experimenting with different sizes of paper and a parachute.
- In pupils' books from last year there were clear targets for improvement and teachers' marking gave advice on how pupils should improve. In the books for this year although there are congratulatory comments from teachers, there are very few tips for improvement and no evidence of targets to aim towards. Pupils themselves were very vague about their targets and explained that they have not been given them yet. However, when asked, pupils were able to give articulate, well-reasoned thoughts about what their targets should be if the teachers set them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils at Wellfield are its real asset. They are friendly, intelligent, articulate and a credit to the school and their families. Parents and carers and staff at all levels in the school confirmed that the children are well behaved, respectful and considerate. This was confirmed in the lessons where boys, girls, pupils of different ethnic backgrounds, and pupils of different ages all worked well together.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons varies depending on the quality of the lesson. Where the teaching was better pupils were keen to learn, focused, interested and they behaved impeccably.
- Pupils integrate very well with and are helpful towards the pupils who have a form of autism and the pupils who are disabled.
- Pupils confirmed there is little name calling. There are occasions where inappropriate language is used towards pupils. Similarly there are a few instances where the term 'gay' is used in a derogatory way. Pupils confirmed teachers sort these situations out well.
- Parents and carers and pupils confirmed their children felt safe in school. Many pupils have a good knowledge about other forms of bullying and how to tackle it. They have a good understanding for example about how to prevent cyber bullying and about internet safety.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils absent for a large amount of time is much lower than the national average. However, pupils who are supported by additional government funding are more likely to have persistent absence than other groups of pupils.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have improved some aspects of the school and as a result, pupils' attainment is rising. However, pupils do not all achieve as well as they should. This is mainly because staff and governors use the school's own measures at the start of Year 3 instead of using the results of national assessments that come from the infant school. This results in an over-generous and inaccurate view about the amount of progress pupils make.

- The deputy headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. School leaders check the quality of teaching through frequent visits to lessons, formal lesson observations and by checking pupils' work. There is an appropriate focus on giving teachers individual targets to improve their lessons and there is a clear link between the quality of teaching and teachers being promoted up the pay scale. However, the focus of the checking is more about the structure of the lesson rather than on a clear analysis of what pupils have learnt and how much progress they have made. There is also only limited follow up from lesson to lesson to improve the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders have been effective in pinpointing where improvements in the school are needed. Attempts to improve pupils' attainment have been partially successful. However, the improvement plan is not focused enough; there are too many priorities identified and too few ways of measuring how successful actions have been.
- Pupils who are supported by additional government funds do not attain well at Wellfield. The gap in standards between this group and other groups of pupils is too large. Their work indicates they make slow progress. The funds have been used appropriately to provide support for individual pupils from teaching assistants but there is limited impact on pupils' achievement. There is evidence, however, of one pupil's behaviour and attitudes improving because of the school's investment in out of hours and holiday clubs.
- Approximately a quarter of 33 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire said they would not recommend the school to another parent and over a quarter disagreed that the school was well led and managed. They said they do not receive enough information about their children's progress or help in how to support them at home.
- The headteacher and governors have worked hard to eliminate any discrimination. Subjects and lessons have been modified to ensure full access for wheelchair users and to include pupils from the autistic unit. More needs to be done to ensure governors and teachers know about all forms of diversity.
- The local authority appropriately placed the school on its schools causing concern register less than a year ago. A representative helped the school conduct a review of pupils' mathematics work and completed some joint lesson observations with the headteacher. The impact of the authority's support is beginning to show in terms of improving teaching in mathematics.
- The quality of the school's website is weak. The content does not meet government requirements and it does not provide enough help or information to parents.
- The school's systems to keep pupils safe and to check staff qualifications and access to pupils meet the government's requirements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Members of the governing body have recognised the need to improve the way they check on the quality of the school's work and have planned an external review to evaluate the quality and impact of their work. At the moment they have limited understanding about how to interpret data about pupils' achievements. Governors have received reports from the School Improvement Partner, from the headteacher and from staff who provide an over-inflated view about the quality of teaching. Members of the governing body need to improve their analysis and questioning to be able to interpret the reports being given to them.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106304
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	400840

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rex Beech
Headteacher	Ms Sandra Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2010
Telephone number	0161 912 3685
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