

Prescot Primary School

Maryville Road, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 2TA

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors do not systematically monitor the impact of the many initiatives taking place in the school.
- Plans to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, lack precision.
- Governors do not challenge senior leaders sufficiently well. They have a partial picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of how pupil premium funding is spent.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2017, pupils' progress and attainment were below average in reading and writing. Current pupils' progress, while improving, is not moving forward well enough in all subjects.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Pupils are not consistently challenged in their learning. As a result, the most able and disadvantaged pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils. Too few opportunities are available for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Investigative work in science is rare. Pupils' books show little evidence of practical, hands-on activities.
- Leaders work to develop pupils' appreciation of the culturally diverse nature of British society is underdeveloped.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They behave well in class, like to find out new things with their peers and are skilled at using technology.
- Parents and carers are highly complimentary about the school. They say that their children are safe, well looked after and progressing well.
- Phonics is taught effectively. The school's current focus on reading is generating a sense of excitement and rapidly improving pupils' reading and comprehension skills.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They benefit from an engaging curriculum which stimulates their interests and ensures their rapid progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that pupils, especially the disadvantaged and most able, receive the right amount of challenge for them to reach at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2
 - making sure that pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning
 - extending opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum
 - making sure that pupils receive sufficient opportunities to plan and carry out investigations in science.
- Improving the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that governors have the appropriate training to carry out their roles and statutory duties effectively
 - ensuring that senior leaders and governors monitor school activities systematically
 - ensuring that staff have the highest possible expectations of all pupils in key stages 1 and 2
 - holding teachers accountable for pupils' achievement
 - making sure that the pupil premium funding has a direct impact on improving disadvantaged pupils' achievement
 - acting to enhance pupils' understanding of the culturally diverse nature of British society.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders, staff and governors do not have high enough expectations of all groups of pupils. As a result, pupils, particularly the disadvantaged who make up almost half of the school population, do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers are not held fully to account for pupils' achievement. This is because procedures to check their performance, including the quality of teaching practice, are not as thorough as they should be. In addition, the targets senior leaders set for teachers are not linked clearly to raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school prides itself on its innovative approach to teaching and learning. As such, senior leaders and teachers are engaged in a range of initiatives aiming to enrich pupils' experiences and raise standards. However, leaders do not monitor such initiatives closely enough, or systematically assess their impact.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, is not spent as effectively as it needs to be to rapidly improve outcomes for eligible pupils. Funding is used to enable pupils to participate in all aspects of school life, including educational trips and visits. However, the support available to develop disadvantaged pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills is not diminishing the differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally quickly enough.
- The school has varied its approach to teaching mathematics in recent years and is currently exploring new ways to advance teachers' skills in deepening pupils' mathematical understanding. In addition, developing reading resources, extending library provision and linking reading to technology, allowing pupils to keep track of their reading on tablets, are having a positive impact of reading. However, writing falls behind other subjects, resulting in slow progress in some year groups.
- Subject leaders, particularly those responsible for English and mathematics, are playing an increasingly effective role in helping to improve the quality of teaching in the subjects for which they are responsible. 'Review days', where observations and group discussions of teacher's practice takes place, give subject leaders an insight into the quality of teaching. However, it is not clear how such reviews develop teachers' practice.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is spent appropriately. However, arrangements for assessing exactly how well such pupils are performing are still developing, as are systems for monitoring the impact of activities aimed at developing pupils' skills in areas such as phonics, reading and writing.
- Senior leaders develop most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are caring and respectful towards each other and staff. They regularly raise money for worthy causes and empathise with those less fortunate than themselves. Year 6 pupils look forward to their 'residential'. Here, they can develop their leadership skills and participate in various outward-bound activities. Pupils enjoy going to the theatre, museums, art galleries and various places of local interest;

discussions with pupils, and an analysis of workbooks, indicate that their knowledge of world faiths is still developing.

- Pupils are conversant with British values, including the rule of law, fair play, individual liberty and tolerance. They enjoy putting democratic principles into practice, which they do as members of the school council, house captains and 'digi' leaders. Pupils must formally apply for all such positions, enabling their peers to engage in informed debate and elections.
- Staff morale is high. All staff who completed the inspection survey, as well as those who spoke with inspectors, indicated that they are appreciative of training and development opportunities. Staff also said they feel valued and motivated by senior leaders.
- Additional funding for primary school sport is used effectively to encourage participation in a wide range of sports, including football, basketball and running. Funding is also used to employ sports coaches and train pupils in Years 5 and 6 to be sports leaders. This year, at least 90% of pupils have engaged in at least one sport. Pupils are increasingly participating in inter-school competitions in sports, including gymnastics and hockey.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They typically comment that 'staff are very approachable', 'children are very well behaved' and 'my child loves going to school'. All parents are of the view that their children are well looked after, happy and safe at school.
- The school receives 'light-touch' support from the local authority. As such, the school's improvement partner has not been directly involved in helping the school to improve the quality of teaching. Recently, the local authority commissioned a review of the school's use of pupil premium funding. However, the action plan subsequently produced by senior leaders lacks clarity and contains few measurable targets.

Governance of the school

- At the time of the inspection, the governing body was in a state of flux. It currently has an acting chair of governors and several vacancies, including for parent governors.
- Governors do not have a strong enough understanding of how well pupil premium funding is helping to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils. Too few know if funding is successfully diminishing the differences in progress between such pupils and others nationally. This is because governors do not ask pertinent questions about pupils' performance. In addition, the plans they receive from leaders do not clearly indicate the school's aspirations for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors know that a major school priority is to raise standards in key stage 2. With the help of an external partner, they set targets for the headteacher's performance. However, they do not consistently challenge senior leaders or ask probing questions about teachers' performance.
- The governing body checks that the single central register is up to date and that leaders and staff keep pupils safe in school.

- Governors come into school for various events, including celebration assemblies and sports days. They know that additional funding for primary school sports is helping to increase pupils' participation in a range of physical education activities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy published on its website.
- Staff are trained well to ensure that pupils are safe from harm. Designated safeguarding leads have all undergone training to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and understanding to perform their duties effectively.
- Staff are familiar with the latest government guidance on keeping children safe in education. Their good relationships with pupils ensure that pupils have the confidence to disclose any concerns they may have.
- Effective systems are in place to record any concerns raised by staff. All concerns are reported quickly to appropriate authorities and parents as necessary.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are made. All staff are familiar with the risk assessments drawn up for the school premises and educational visits.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of all groups of pupils. Because pupils are not fully challenged, too few reach the standards of which they are capable by the end of key stage 2.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils on their work lacks consistency. As a result, few pupils who spoke with inspectors could say what they need to do to improve their work in mathematics and English. Senior leaders are currently reviewing the school's feedback and assessment policy.
- Pupils are not adequately challenged in mathematics. In two Year 4 classes, pupils were asked to look at various graphs, comparing rainfall in Cardiff and Athens, and draw conclusions from them. The data presented in the graphs became slightly more challenging in subsequent activities. For example, one question required pupils to compare temperature as well as rainfall in the two countries over a 12-month period. However, the most able pupils found this work easy. Pupils' workbooks reveal that, too often, pupils' work is the same, despite the wide range of abilities in most classes. Such lack of challenge limits the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards in mathematics.
- Some teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to write for different purposes. Pupils' books contain examples of well-presented and interesting pieces of writing on subjects such as the evacuation of children during the Second World War. Some pupils write with passion and put forward persuasive arguments on a range of topical issues. However, workbooks reveal that too few opportunities are available for pupils to write at length and practise their writing skills across the curriculum. Consequently, too few develop the stamina needed for longer pieces and mastery of different styles of writing, which is required of them by the end of Year 6.

- Pupils' science books contain very few examples of practical scientific investigations. Senior leaders are aware of the need to broaden this aspect of the curriculum, particularly for pupils in key stage 2, to ensure their readiness for the science curriculum in key stage 3.
- Teaching assistants are usually well deployed. This was evident in several observations of mathematic and English in key stage 1, where they provided effective support to pupils of different abilities, including the most able and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. In a Year 1 mathematics class, all groups of pupils were supported well as they engaged in different activities. All pupils could identify tens and units in numbers such as 34, 28, 52, 67. The most able were able to discuss the characteristics of the different numbers, including whether they were divisible by two and five.
- Classrooms are bright, stimulating places where pupils are keen to learn, ask questions and explore different topics with their peers. This was evident in a Year 3 class where, after researching facts and figures about Indonesia, pupils were eager to engage in a multiple-choice quiz. They demonstrated how much they had learned, by correctly identifying the currency used in Indonesia, as well as facts about its weather and tourism.
- Teachers usually develop pupils' debating skills well. This ensures that pupils can clearly articulate their ideas while appreciating other points of view. Pupils' strong persuasive skills were evident in Year 5, where they engaged in calm, informed debate on whether plants and animals should be allowed to die out through natural selection or be conserved in all circumstances.
- Teachers have instilled in pupils a love of books. Pupils are proud of their reading achievements and enjoy competing with their peers for the most books read. Pupils enjoy reading in class and for pleasure at home. Most pupils who read for inspectors did so fluently and with expression. Good phonics teaching in key stage 1 equips the less able readers well. For example, Year 1 pupils use their phonics skills well to sound out and read unfamiliar words.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- Leaders and teachers focus on developing pupils' independence and freedom of choice. As such, older pupils have access to the school library, dining hall, 'comfortable' seats in corridors and computers at regular intervals during the school day.
- In preparation for the next phase of their learning in secondary school, many opportunities are available for pupils to develop their leadership skills. In Prescot Primary School, pupils execute their responsibilities, including as reading champions and sports leaders, in earnest. They are determined to serve their school well and do their best.
- Most pupils' ability to learn from mistakes and explore new ways of doing things is well developed. When they have choice, pupils are increasingly selecting more challenging work. However, their understanding of what they need to do to improve their learning is not as strong as it should be.

- Transition arrangements are well established between all phases. Older pupils know exactly what to expect from high school. As delegates, they attend conferences at school, where they can meet teachers, ask questions about their new school and, together with parents, familiarise themselves with the social and academic expectations of Year 7 pupils.
- Pupils know how to stay safe while online. Older pupils are aware of the potential dangers of surfing the internet. They say that 'you should never use "apps" meant for older children, or "friend" people you don't know'. Pupils know that they can approach 'digi' leaders or teachers if they are unsure about the safety of a website.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know that they can talk to any adult, secure in the knowledge that their concern will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly.
- Various visitors from the police, fire and social services talk to pupils, often during assemblies, about safe and unsafe situations.
- Pupils regularly attend the breakfast club, which helps to ensure that they are well prepared for the day ahead. Here, pupils can eat a healthy breakfast and catch up with their classmates while their peers engage in vigorous exercise during their 'wake and shake' activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are attentive. Their good, considerate behaviour ensures that Prescot Primary School is a peaceful and purposeful place, where all enjoy learning. Most pupils are passionate about learning and want to do well. This was evident when pupils talked to inspectors about how much they enjoyed reading.
- Pupils follow instructions carefully in class and are adept at carrying out independent research on their tablets and other electronic devices. They enjoy assemblies, which generate a sense of excitement and occasion. This was evident during the inspection when pupils celebrated sporting achievements and considered the importance of aiming high in their aspirations.
- Older pupils who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour is good most of the time. Those who completed the inspection questionnaire indicated that behaviour is good around the school, during lunchtimes, breaktimes and in classrooms. All pupils stated that bullying is rare.
- Pupils are proud of their school and look after it. They move around the school sensibly and safely and with consideration for others. Pupils open doors without prompting, are very welcoming to visitors, and take pride in the presentation of their work.
- As it was sports week, all pupils wore sports clothes during the inspection. However, pupils' behaviour was exceptional, despite the excitement generated by various sports highlights, including a visit from a professional basketball player.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about pupils' behaviour, as are staff and governors. Few incidents are recorded in the school's behaviour logs, which indicate that pupils' behaviour is typically good.

- Pupils say that bullying rarely, if ever, happens. They know what racism is and are adamant that 'there's none of that here'. Pupils' understanding of other forms of discrimination, such as those based on gender and sexuality, is less well developed.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average, as it has been for the past three years. Very few pupils are disadvantaged by persistent absence. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historical data indicates that achievement at the end of key stage 2 declined for two years, up until 2017. During this time, pupils' progress was especially weak in writing, where it was in the lowest 10% of all schools and for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was better, though still below average.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2017, pupils' attainment in all subjects, including grammar and punctuation, was below average at the expected standard. An above average proportion of pupils attained at the higher standard in mathematics.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2017, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average, including at greater depth in writing and at higher standards in reading and mathematics.
- The school's own data indicates that in 2017, pupils' progress was inconsistent across all year groups. Current data indicates that improvements have been made in reading and mathematics. However, pupils' progress is not consistently good, especially in writing.
- The school's own data and assessment information show that not enough pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. This was confirmed when inspectors worked alongside senior leaders to carry out a detailed scrutiny of current pupils' workbooks. The scrutiny included books from across key stages 1 and 2 and included various subjects, such as English, mathematics, history and science. Leaders agreed that books indicated that pupils' progress is too variable.
- Pupils' progress in writing varies because opportunities for them to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum are often missed in subjects such as science. Pupils make most progress when they can write at length about topics of interest in history and geography, such as the disappearance of tropical rain forests, which they write about with great conviction.
- While strong progress is evident in mathematics in some workbooks, it is weak in others. This is because pupils are not challenged consistently. Senior leaders recognise that there is more to do to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. This is evident where pupils are given additional work in mathematics which is either not challenging enough or serves only to reinforce existing skills.
- Phonics teaching is effective. For the past three years, the proportion of pupils secure in their phonics skills and knowledge at the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been average. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils

achieving secure skills has been below average over time. The school's own data indicates that almost all such pupils are making strong progress in phonics this year.

- At the end of Year 6 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well below average. At the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was well below that of other pupils nationally in all subjects, writing being especially weak. Currently, progress is better. Some disadvantaged pupils are outperforming their peers in school. However, differences in the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally are not diminishing rapidly enough.
- Effective provision is available for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinators work in partnership with various specialists to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Tailored teaching activities, including those aimed at developing pupils' language and communication skills, effectively meet pupils' specific educational needs, giving them access to the curriculum and enabling them to make rapid progress.
- Few pupils attained higher standards in reading, writing, grammar and punctuation at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Pupils' attainment in all subjects at the end of key stage 1 was in line with the national average. Senior leaders have made it a priority to increase the number of higher-attaining pupils by challenging the most able. However, many pupils who spoke with inspectors indicated that work was sometimes too easy. Pupils' workbooks confirm that they are not strongly challenged in their learning.
- Pupils' progress in other subjects, such as science, art, history, physical education and geography, is not consistently good. Pupils' good skills and ability in using and applying technology ensure their strong progress in subjects such as computing and information and communication technology.
- Pupils' progress, though inconsistent, is heading in the right direction this year. Most Year 6 pupils are furnished with the necessary skills and abilities for their learning in Year 7.

Early years provision

Good

- All aspects of the leadership and management of the early years provision, including teaching and children's behaviour and progress, are good. The early years leader and staff are trained well and have a firm understanding of how young children learn.
- Learning takes place in large, bright, well-resourced classrooms and outdoor learning and play areas which celebrate children's work and stimulates their interests.
- The school's data indicates that children's skills on entry to the Nursery are weak in several areas, including speech and language. However, children get off to a flying start. For the past three years, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development has been broadly in line with expectations for the age group. During this period, disadvantaged children's attainment was lower than that of other children nationally.
- This year, senior leaders' work to eliminate disparities between groups of children has been successful. As a result, most children, including those who are disadvantaged, are

making rapid and sustained progress. Children's learning journeys, and workbooks, show that they make strong progress over time in most areas of learning.

- Leaders use the additional funding they receive for children who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. Consequently, these children make sustained progress from their starting points, which are often low.
- Children are very cooperative. They are inquisitive and enjoy exploring the world around them. This was evident in the outdoor play area used by the children in the Reception classes. Here, children enjoyed balancing on tyres, building dens and playing various musical instruments. All activities took place under the watchful eyes of the safeguarding officers on patrol. Equipped with clipboards and note paper, they identified several risks, which included nettles, twigs, roots and holes. Diligently, children wrote down their concerns, which they reported to staff.
- Children achieve well, because staff have very high expectations of them. This was evident in a mathematics class in a Reception class, where pupils were doubling odd and even numbers. The teacher made the session interesting by asking pupils to double the ages of two children, both four, before challenging them even further to double seven and then 10. Children were praised highly for their efforts and use of mathematical language in their discussions with peers.
- Children behave sensibly and safely. This was evident in the outdoor area of the Nursey, where children were developing their coordination skills while competing to ride their wheeled toys around the race track as fast as possible. Children love their chickens, 'bug hotel' residents, flowers and vegetables. All these resources help them to understand the world around them.
- Children enjoy writing. This was evident in the Nursery, where they were engaged in a range of activities linked to the whole-school theme of saving endangered Indonesian songbirds, such as the Javan green magpie. Children discussed their views on keeping birds in cages, which they thought was wrong, and imagined a world without birdsong. They were keen to produce posters as part of their conservation campaign and wrote that 'we should help the songbird because it is in danger'.
- Staff share curriculum plans with parents. In turn, parents are asked to complete a 'what I have achieved' chart, and highlight children's development and learning at home. This helps early years staff to form a full picture of children's learning and skills.
- Parents are very complimentary about the early years provision. They appreciate the school's 'open door' policy and opportunities to come into school to find out what their children are learning.
- Staff use various electronic means to track children's progress and identify any gaps in their learning. Interventions (small-group teaching activities) are usually available when necessary. Leaders are exploring how such information could be used even more effectively in planning to ensure that all groups of children achieve to their absolute best.
- The early years leader is ambitious and has secured funding to further develop outdoor learning and play areas.
- Safeguarding is effective. The procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are adhered to in the early years, as well as procedures specific to early years settings.

School details

Unique reference number	104425
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10045776

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Macklin
Headteacher	Stephen George
Telephone number	0151 432 7100
Website	www.prescotprimary.org.uk
Email address	admin@prescotprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Three new governors have joined the governing body, which is currently led by an acting chair of the governing body.
- Outdoor provision for children in the Reception classes has been developed and extended.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average. A well below average proportion of pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Prescott School is larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost half of all pupils are disadvantaged and in receipt of support through the pupil premium funding.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

- Children under five attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. All children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body. This provision was inspected.
- Provision for two-year-olds is available on site. The provider, Kids in Bloom, is independent and subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils learn to read.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors read 41 free-text responses submitted by parents during the inspection and considered 42 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Responses to the inspection questionnaires by 40 members of staff and 114 pupils were also considered.
- A meeting was held with two governors. Telephone conversations took place with two governors, including the acting chair of the governing body.
- Meetings were held with various leaders and subject specialists responsible for English and mathematics. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for assessing pupils' learning and progress, the early years provision, and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Meetings were held with pastoral staff and those responsible for attendance and safeguarding.
- A meeting was held with a school improvement representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's checks on the quality of teaching and reviews of its own performance, information about pupils' progress, development plans, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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