

Darnhall Primary School

Sandyhill Road, Darnhall, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 1JL

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have maintained the good quality of education provided by the school. They have ensured that the school continues to improve.
- Leaders provide a caring and nurturing environment where pupils grow in confidence and are keen to learn. This has a positive effect on their progress.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' capabilities. They provide activities that interest and engage pupils in their learning.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading is a strength of the school. Pupils read widely and often, developing a love of, and enthusiasm for, reading.
- Pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2, although improving, is not as strong as in other subjects.
- Recently, pupils' attendance has shown a slight decline and the level of persistent absence has risen.
- Teaching often challenges pupils to extend their learning. However, at times, expectations are not high enough for the most able pupils.
- Children in the early years, including two-year-olds, enjoy their learning and make good progress. By the end of Reception Year, they are well prepared to begin Year 1.
- Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a broad range of subjects and after-school activities, which promote their positive progress and all-round development.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is good. They are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- Governors have further developed their skills and expertise since the previous inspection. They have a deep and accurate understanding of the school. They support and challenge the school's leaders in promoting improvement.
- Leaders' monitoring of the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities who do not attend the resourced provision is not as well established as that of the progress of other pupils in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - accelerating the progress of pupils in key stage 2 in writing
 - ensuring that expectations are consistently high for the most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - refining the monitoring and evaluation of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to provide a more detailed picture of their progress
 - continuing to work closely with families to increase attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have worked effectively to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress remain good. They took swift action following the disappointing results in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 to improve teaching and pupils' progress. Improvements to pupils' attainment and the establishment of effective provision for two-year-old children also demonstrate leaders' capacity to improve the school further.
- Leaders' systems to monitor the quality of teaching ensure that teaching remains good. Staff appreciate the training they are offered to further improve their skills. Training in the teaching of writing has had a positive effect on improving pupils' progress in this subject.
- Leaders carefully monitor all aspects of provision and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have clear and realistic plans to improve the school further.
- The leadership of SEN and/or disabilities is developing. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is relatively new to post. The progress of pupils attending the 'kaleidoscope' resourced unit is carefully monitored. However, the monitoring of the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities attending other classes in school is not as well developed. This means that leaders do not have a detailed picture of progress with which to plan the next steps.
- The leadership of subjects is effective. The leaders of mathematics and English have a good understanding of their subjects and monitor teaching and pupils' progress closely. The leadership of science has developed recently. Closer monitoring of progress and staff training have contributed to an improving picture of progress and attainment.
- Leaders provide a broad curriculum, which engages pupils' interests. Pupils enjoy a range of after-school activities such as animal welfare, watercolour and craft clubs, which enhance and develop their skills and interests.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding to provide extra staff to support pupils' learning. They have a good knowledge of pupils' barriers to learning and target funds effectively to overcome them. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress, and differences in attainment between them and other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- In this very inclusive school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. They show respect for others, including those who may be different from themselves.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved and is a strong feature of the school. Governors are ambitious for the school. They ensure that they have the relevant information from leaders to give them a deep and accurate understanding of the school's provision. This enables them to support and challenge leaders. Governors make a significant

contribution to the school's development.

- Governors know the school well. They visit regularly to observe, for themselves, the provision. They carefully monitor the progress of the school's action plan.
- Governors fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. They closely monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding to ensure that all requirements are met.
- Governors know how leaders use additional funding and its impact on pupils' outcomes. Minutes of meetings show that governors ask probing questions about finance, staffing, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors' ambition for the school is reflected in their strategic long-term planning for the school's development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture of vigilance where all staff are aware of their roles in ensuring pupils' safety and protection. Staff are well trained in identifying concerns and the procedures to follow. These include the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders work well with partners and outside agencies to ensure that concerns are followed up in a timely way and that pupils are well protected.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey agreed that the school keeps their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers provide well-planned activities which promote pupils' interest and their positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils engage well in their learning and make good progress.
- Staff establish positive relationships with pupils, and this contributes to their enjoyment of learning and progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. The school's recent focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills is bearing fruit. For example, pupils in key stage 1 showed confidence in deciding which number operation to use to multiply two numbers. They demonstrated proficiency in explaining the reasons for choosing a method.
- Teachers give clear explanations so that pupils know what is expected. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 focused well on writing an informal letter. They were very clear about their task and showed a good understanding of this style of writing.
- Staff effectively develop pupils' love of reading and stories. Pupils show a good understanding of books and an enthusiasm for reading.
- Phonics is generally well taught. Younger pupils are familiar with the daily sessions and respond well to activities to reinforce and extend their knowledge. However, at times, teachers do not closely match these activities to pupils' abilities. As a result, they do

not challenge them sufficiently.

- This occasional lack of challenge is also evident in other subjects, where expectations are not high enough for the most able pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Staff provide effective support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They know pupils' capabilities well and use this knowledge to develop their learning. For example, in the resourced provision, they skilfully promote discussion among pupils and encourage them to think deeply.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning. They engage well with small groups to question pupils and help them to make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school. They show positive attitudes and an enthusiasm for learning. Pupils who spoke with inspectors praised the broad range of extra-curricular activities such as science club, eco-club and a variety of sports clubs.
- Pupils show respect for each other. They cooperate well in lessons to share ideas and listen to the contributions of others. The school is a harmonious environment and all pupils are positively included. Pupils show a good awareness of difference, for example in culture or faith, and how it is important to respect the beliefs and views of others.
- Pupils show a good awareness of safety. They know about the different types of bullying and said that their understanding is developed through, for example, the school's anti-bullying workshop. They understand how to stay safe online.
- Pupils enjoy a range of roles and responsibilities in school, such as those of school councillors and junior e-safety officers. They are proud of their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the school's systems for promoting good behaviour. Their conduct is good in lessons and at breaktimes. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Most pupils show a pride in their work.
- Pupils engage well with their learning. They listen attentively to instructions and are keen to learn.
- Leaders keep a close eye on levels of attendance and persistent absence. They are rightly focused on the attendance of the small proportion of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. The school is working hard with families to raise overall attendance, which has recently dipped below national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress has improved, particularly in writing. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects.
- In 2017, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. This represented an improvement in pupils' progress in writing from significantly below average in 2016.
- In 2017, standards showed improvement in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 and in reading at the end of key stage 2. At the end of key stage 2, standards were above average in reading, in line with the average in mathematics but below average for writing.
- Current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is strongest in reading. Progress in writing has improved and is good in most year groups. However, the standards pupils reach in writing, although improving, lag behind what is expected for their age, particularly in key stage 2. Leaders recognise that progress in writing for pupils in key stage 2 needs to accelerate further to raise standards, so that pupils are better prepared for the transfer to secondary school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Currently, in some year groups they outperform non-disadvantaged pupils. As a result of this good progress, the differences in attainment between this group and other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those attending the resourced provision, make good progress as they are well supported by staff who have a good knowledge of their capabilities.
- The progress of the most able pupils is improving. Most pupils make good progress but, on occasion, expectations for their progress are too low, with the result that pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who join the school at times other than Reception Year settle well in this welcoming school. They make good progress from their starting points, which are often lower than those typical for their age.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Nursery and Reception classes with skill levels that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress and most attain a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. This means they are well prepared for the transfer to Year 1.
- Children quickly become accustomed to the routines of Nursery and Reception classes. They behave well and show that they feel secure in their environment. They grow in confidence and are keen to learn.
- Since the previous inspection, Nursery provision has been extended to include provision for two-year-old children. Two-year-old children are settled and enjoy their learning. They are secure in their surroundings and show positive relationships with staff. For example, they happily respond to instructions to hold up and count three fingers. They enthusiastically make the same number of 'hops' along the floor to reinforce their understanding.

- Older Nursery children confidently make use of the range of resources in the indoor and outdoor environments. Children engaged well in a search for objects to use in their investigation of what will float or sink.
- Staff have a good knowledge of children's skills, capabilities and interests. They use this knowledge well to provide activities that interest children and develop their learning. For example, children's skills in construction and writing were developed as they used construction bricks to make models for which they then wrote labels.
- Staff are skilled at asking questions which challenge children to think and extend their learning. For example, Reception children who were engaged in an activity to double numbers were asked: 'What do you need to do next to find double four?'
- The early years leader carefully monitors children's progress. She has a good awareness of the strength of provision and areas to develop further. Leaders' information shows that the good progress of two-year-old children has had a positive impact on ensuring that more children now join Reception Year with skill levels that are typical for their age than was previously the case.
- Staff establish a positive partnership with parents. Parents share their observations of their children's learning, for example through the online learning journeys. They are encouraged and supported in developing their children's learning at home. This positive partnership contributes to children's good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	111133
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10042470

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	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Strachan
Headteacher	Sarah Tomlinson
Telephone number	01606 593315
Website	www.darnhall.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@darnhall.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2013

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year is much higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is resourced by its local authority to provide seven places for pupils who

have social, emotional or behavioural needs.

- The school operates from two sites. Early years and key stage 1 provision are accommodated in one building and key stage 2 and the resourced provision in another. The sites are within easy walking distance of one another.
- The school provides a Nursery, which caters for children aged from two to four years.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. One observation was carried out jointly with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and four other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors also held a meeting with a representative of the local authority and a telephone meeting with an independent consultant supporting the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of its meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 40 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the comments of 41 parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 33 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupils' questionnaire to consider.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018