

# Frodsham Weaver Vale Primary School

Ship Street, Frodsham, Warrington WA6 7PZ

**Inspection dates** 23–24 September 2015

**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	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school. Together with a very efficient and active governing body, senior leaders have ensured that both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have greatly improved since the previous inspection. The new headteacher and senior leadership team are already having further positive impact.
- Middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, are very effective and make a good contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching, including in the early years, is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well. They regularly and accurately assess how well pupils are performing.
- Pupils and children with autistic spectrum disorders receive excellent care and support. This ensures their outstanding progress.
- Pupils attend school regularly and behave well. They are highly respectful to each other, staff and visitors. They say they always feel safe and well looked after.
- In 2015, almost all Year 6 pupils made at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a consequence, their attainment improved considerably and was close to that of pupils nationally.
- Year 2 pupils also made good progress and so attained the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015. Work seen in classrooms suggests that their progress is continuing to accelerate.
- The primary school sports funding is exceptionally well spent and makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' participation in competitive sports
- Parents are highly complimentary about all aspects of the school, and feel well informed.
- Early years provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. As a result, children make good progress and achieve well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, and children in the early years, do not always have enough opportunities to practise and refine their writing skills across all subjects.
- Tasks and activities provided for pupils in class are not always hard enough, especially for the most able.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is outstanding and in so doing raise pupils' achievement across the school even further by:
  - providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils, and children in the early years, to practise and refine their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum
  - making sure that tasks and activities in class always challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to achieve to the best of their ability.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school is well led and managed by a new leadership team. Although the headteacher and early years leader have only been in post since the beginning of this term, they have been able to 'hit the ground running' because they took the time to work alongside staff and governors before formally taking up their posts.
- Inspection evidence, including school data, discussions with staff and parents, and work in pupils' books, indicates that pupils, children in the early years and those in the resource base, make good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders have systematically tackled all areas for improvement identified from the previous inspection and monitoring visits. This has led to greatly improved teaching and learning across the school.
- Staff responsible for leading English, mathematics, special educational needs and early years have benefited from good professional development and support, so helping them to make an effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning. They monitor the quality of teaching well by observing teachers' practice, checking information on pupils' performance, and assessing the quality of work in pupils' books.
- School leaders' action to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils is highly effective. The support provided has helped these pupils to make the same rapid progress as their peers in most year groups and in all subjects. Funding is also used to ensure that pupils fully participate in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils benefit from an engaging and well-planned curriculum. They enjoy learning about the topics such as Amazon rain forest and Mayan culture. They regularly visit museums and local places of interest and participate in residential education trips in Key Stage 2. The curriculum develops pupils' reading and mathematical skills well. Senior leaders are introducing plans to ensure that pupils' writing skills are equally well developed across all subjects. The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils enjoy raising money for various charities and can empathise with people less fortunate than themselves. The school's links with schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe help to enhance pupils' appreciation of life in other countries. Its multi-faith curriculum develops their understanding of world faiths. Pupils enjoy visiting the theatre, singing, learning French and playing brass and string instruments.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of British values, such as the rule of law and democracy. The new senior leadership team is eager to further develop pupils' understanding of the culturally diverse nature of British society.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that the primary school sports funding is exceptionally well spent. Most pupils participate in extra-curricular sporting activities such as tennis, dodge-ball, tag-rugby and netball. The school has also been notably successful in local competitions in cross-country and kwik cricket.
- The school promotes highly effective relations with parents, who are very appreciative of new forms of electronic communication used by the school. Parents are eager to get involved in the revitalised parent-school association.
- The school's work to challenge discrimination, foster good relations and promote equality of opportunity is good. Systems used to check on how well groups of pupils are performing are highly effective in identifying and supporting any groups of pupils in danger of falling behind. The care and support that staff give to enable pupils with autistic disorders to fully participate in school life is outstanding.
- The school has a productive relationship with its local authority school improvement partner, who has provided good support and advice on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors both challenge and support the school in equal measure. Since the previous inspection they have worked closely with senior leaders to devise a plan of action to tackle areas for improvement. Governors have taken a long, hard look at the skills they need to do a good job. In order to make sure their work is effective they have taken advantage of training and have recruited new members to fill identified 'skills gaps'.

- Governors know from first-hand evidence that the quality of teaching is good and improving. They talk to pupils about their work, look at teachers' marking, and check to see what pupils learn in the classroom. Governors know that teachers' hard work is paying off, and are prepared to reward them for it when performance targets are met.
- Governors know that there is room for further school improvements, especially in relation to writing, and aim to ensure that more rapid rates of progress lead to higher attainment, matching that of pupils nationally.
- Governors know that the pupil premium funding is making a difference to the lives of the pupils it supports. They are fully aware of the impact of the extra teaching support pupils receive. They insist that funding is used to ensure that all pupils have every opportunity to participate in all aspects of school life, including educational visits, playing musical instruments and engaging in sporting activities.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching and assessment, including in the early years and the resource base, is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils and children well. They regularly monitor how pupils and children are performing, and ensure that they practise and refine their reading, mathematical, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills daily.
- Pupils learn in bright, stimulating classrooms which celebrate their work and provide opportunities for them to discover and find things out for themselves and take on extra challenges.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' work. Their marking is of a very high standard in English, mathematics and other subjects. Pupils said that they found their teachers' marking helpful and that they are regularly given time to correct errors, do extra work or indicate to their teachers that they have read and understood comments. Almost all pupils spoken to by the inspector could talk about what they are doing well and what they need to do to further improve their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well. They use information, including performance data, to plan activities of increasing levels of complexity. Even so, tasks and activities in class do not always challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to achieve to the absolute best of their ability.
- Teaching support staff provide highly focused one-to-one and small group activities as well as support in class for both the most able and any pupils who find learning difficult.
- Teachers are very effective in engaging pupils so that they make rapid progress. This is exemplified in the resource base, where the specialist skills of teaching staff enable them to employ a broad range of strategies so that pupils develop their basic skills and are able to learn alongside their peers.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This is regularly updated and has been an important factor in improving the quality of teaching. For example, teachers' secure mathematics knowledge helps to ensure that pupils develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts and are able to tackle challenging problem-solving activities.
- Teachers expect all pupils to participate fully in classroom activities, which they do with great enthusiasm. Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy sharing their work and views with others. This was exemplified in a Key Stage 2 English class where pupils were using words from an 'awesome checklist' to make their written work more interesting. When asked, pupils confidently stood up and read their work, with others offering their opinions. However, sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is good. This was demonstrated in a very purposeful mixed Year 1/2 class where pupils worked in different groups on activities such as identifying sounds and altering the ending of words to change them from singular to plural. At the same time a small group of pupils progressed well while working with a speech and language assistant on letters and sound recognition.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attendance is much improved since the previous inspection, and is currently above average. Pupils rarely miss school, and understand the importance of good attendance and how this links to good

achievement.

- Pupils and children in the early years are becoming increasingly confident and self-assured. They enjoy learning and are eager to talk about their work, answer questions and present their ideas.
- The care and support that pupils receive in the resource base make an outstanding contribution to their personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspector said that they feel well looked after and able to speak in confidence to any member of staff about any matters relating to their safety or welfare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe while using the internet. They know not to give personal information out to anyone while online or when using mobile phones or game consoles, and have a good understanding of cyber-bullying and how to avoid it.
- The school works closely with the local community police officer, who regularly talks to pupils about staying safe around strangers and, for example, how to avoid accidents during Bonfire Night and Halloween.
- Older pupils learn about the dangers and risks associated with drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and are taught to avoid anti-social behaviour and understand the characteristics of good citizenship. All pupils learn about road safety, and are taken on guided walks to local shops, the fire station and library. Older pupils learn how to ride their bicycles safely, and to develop an awareness of the potential dangers of being on the road.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good most of the time. Parents, governors and teachers agree with this view. Those parents who met with or wrote to the inspector were highly positive about the way in which pupils conduct themselves. Inspection evidence, including a check on the school's behaviour logs, confirms that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils are respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. They are courteous, polite and considerate, move around the school with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly during lunchtimes. Pupils' behaviour in class is good. They listen carefully to what their teachers have to say and follow instructions well.
- Pupils take pride in their school and their work. They are appreciative of their school grounds, including the 'Golden Mile' and wooded area, and make sure that the school is kept free of litter.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and is always dealt with. They have a good understanding of most forms of bullying, including racism, which they say never happens in school and that 'it's good to be different'. Pupils' understanding of other forms of prejudice and discrimination, such as homophobic bullying, is below that often found in pupils of this age.

### Outcomes for pupils

### are good

- The progress of all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Historical data show that in 2014, at the end of Year 6, pupils made outstanding progress in reading and good progress in writing and mathematics from very low starting points. In 2015 pupils' progress was even better. For example, at the end of Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress in reading and writing and good progress in mathematics. All groups of pupils made at least good progress in all subjects across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, pupils' attainment was below average in all subjects. However, this is a rapidly changing picture. For example, provisional data show that at the end of Year 6 in 2015, pupils made substantial gains in all subjects, most notably in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and attained standards close to those expected for their age.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was much improved on previous years, and was well above average for disadvantaged pupils (who made up half of a small cohort). In 2015, standards attained by pupils improved even further, and were in line with those expected for their age.
- This year pupils have got off to a flying start. All available evidence, including a full scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, teachers and parents, indicate that the achievement of pupils is continuing on an upward trajectory.

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the national phonics screening check in 2014 was well above average. School data show that a smaller proportion were secure at the check in 2015. However, the school has put in place an excellent programme of support for those pupils not secure in their phonic skills and knowledge, and they are making accelerated progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to read as much as possible, reading in class every day. Those pupils who read for the inspector used their phonics skills well to sound out and read unfamiliar words. Less-able readers said that the help provided by their teachers and teaching assistants had made reading easier and more enjoyable.
- Pupils' progress in writing is rapidly improving. Evidence of this is in their books, where pupils demonstrate their good ability to write in a range of styles. For example, pupils are encouraged to write about their many visits, evaluate their writing, and use 'interesting adjectives', similes and metaphors to improve their work. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils and children in the early years to practise and refine their writing skills across all subjects.
- School data show that standards attained by pupils in mathematics are rapidly improving across the school. This is because teachers are well trained, make learning fun and focus on deepening pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Work in pupils' books shows highly effective examples of mathematics being taught in science and geography, demonstrating pupils' good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Historical data for 2014 show that most pupils in Year 6 in 2014 were disadvantaged, so it is not possible to make any meaningful comparisons between their performance and that of their peers in school. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about a year behind all pupils nationally in mathematics and two terms behind in reading and writing. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was at least as good as all pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and much better in writing. Current data show an even better picture, with most disadvantaged pupils having made accelerated progress to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6 in 2015.
- Pupils and children in the resource base make good and outstanding progress. Teachers and teaching assistants are expert at identifying pupils' learning needs and use a range of inventive strategies in order to engage them in learning. The excellent care and support that pupils receive is much appreciated by parents, with whom the school works exceptionally well.
- Comparisons between the performance of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and all pupils nationally have to be treated with caution, due to the small size of the Year 6 cohort in 2014. However, good teaching, and good leadership and management, ensured that almost all pupils in this cohort made good progress and attained well. The 2015 cohort was much larger. School data show that in this year these pupils made at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and attained well, as they did in all year groups.
- The school's own data show that in 2015 a small number of pupils attained exceptionally high standards in mathematics. There is evidence that the most-able pupils are often making good progress because teachers are setting them harder work. However, this is not always the case. Senior leaders have made it a priority to raise attainment further by making sure that teachers consistently challenge pupils to achieve to the very best of their ability.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- The leadership and management of all aspects of early years provision, including teaching and children's achievement, are good. The current early years manager, who is new in this post, is carrying on the good work of his predecessor. He has gained the confidence and trust of parents, has a very secure understanding of how children learn and ensures that effective systems are in place to assess how well children are performing.
- All early years staff have high expectations of what children are capable of achieving. They plan engaging and stimulating activities which enhance children's understanding of the world around them, ensuring that they progress well.
- Detailed assessment information indicates that children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities which are below those expected for their age in all areas of learning. The skills of many children are especially weak in language and communication. However, they get off to an excellent start, progress well, and enter the Reception class with well-developed skills in listening and attention.

- Historic data show that the majority of children made good progress from low starting points in the Reception class in 2014. An average proportion attained a good level of development and most were ready for the next stage in their learning in Year 1, showing strong self-confidence and speaking skills. The school's own data show that a similar proportion of children attained a good level of development in 2015 as in the previous year. Early years staff are well aware that some areas of learning are not as strong as others, including writing, and have made these priority areas for development. Inspection evidence, including discussions with children, observations of teaching and children's work show that they are making rapid progress this year and attaining exceptionally well.
- Children learn in stimulating and well-organised indoor and outdoor learning areas which display and celebrate their work. Children are cooperative, and enjoy learning and discovering new things with their friends. This was evident as children carefully listened to the Bear Hunt story, joined in with the chorus and asked sensible questions about the bear's activities. When on the bear hunt that followed, children could hardly contain their excitement as their teacher emphasised the feel of the grass, water and soil over which they traversed in their quest to find the bear.
- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's counting and calculation skills. This is evident during snack-time, where children are encouraged to count pieces of fruit and make different calculations.
- In the Reception class staff provide a range of opportunities to further develop children's mathematical and communication skills. Staff are highly skilled at developing vocabulary through their good questioning methods. This was exemplified in a challenging mathematics session where children were engaged in a number of activities linked to counting.
- Children are well supervised at all times. They behave very well, move between classes sensibly and use their wheeled toys, construction tools and sand pit considerately.
- Parents are very complimentary about the work of the early years staff. They are very happy with the way technology is used as this makes it possible for them to see immediately what their children have been learning. Staff regularly inform parents of their children's progress and encourage them to monitor their children's development and share this information with the school. Parents are happy that their children are safe and well looked after.
- Staff ensure children's safety by applying the same good safeguarding procedures in operation in Key Stages 1 and 2 in the early years provision.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111115
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	11112271

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Sutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Van Geffen
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244981115
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.weavervale.cheshire.sch.uk">www.weavervale.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 September 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. This is in addition to those in the local authority resource base.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is twice the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the early years provision attend Nursery on a full- and part-time basis. This includes provision for two- and three-year-olds. Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the time of the previous inspection, a learning mentor has been employed, and there have been a number of teacher and teaching assistant appointments. The senior leadership team has been reorganised, and includes a newly appointed headteacher and early years manager, as well as an established deputy headteacher. Three new governors have joined the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils leave or join the school at times other than the start of the academic year.
- All pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 learn in one of three mixed year-groups.
- The school houses a local authority resource base for up to seven children on the autistic spectrum from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- Provision for two year-olds was inspected on 21 May 2015, at which time it was judged to be good. This report can be read on Ofsted's website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- A breakfast club is available to pupils. This is managed by the governing body.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of lessons in all year groups, including in the resource base, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised with senior leaders.
- The inspector considered the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the school's own surveys of parents' views. Informal meetings were held with parents at the beginning of the school day. Four letters from parents were also considered.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaire completed by 22 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting was held with eight governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body (via video conferencing). Meetings were also held with school leaders and staff responsible for English, mathematics, Key Stages 1 and 2, provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and children in the early years.
- A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents was examined. These included the school's reviews of its own performance, information about pupils' progress, the school's checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, various records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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