

Dee Point Primary School

Blacon Point Road, Blacon, Chester, Cheshire CH1 5NF

Inspection dates

2–3 October 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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully steered the school through a challenging period. They have tackled issues of staff recruitment and retention and a rapid growth in pupil numbers with great determination. Their efforts have ensured that Dee Point is providing a good quality of education for its pupils.
- After a concerning period of decline, outcomes for pupils are now improving strongly, particularly for younger pupils. Achievement in phonics is particularly good, while standards in key stage 1 in reading, mathematics and now writing are rising rapidly. However, previous underachievement means that pupils' attainment in key stage 2, most particularly in writing, requires further improvement so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected standard at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders' efforts have stabilised teaching across the school and ensured that it is effective. Teachers typically have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to draw out pupils' learning. Support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including those in the resource base, is effective and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and those who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey would recommend the school to others.
- Children get off to a good start in early years, where they quickly and happily settle into the routines of school life. Children make strong progress in Reception, but despite this a below-average proportion achieve a good level of development.
- The well-planned and engaging curriculum provides pupils with plenty of opportunities to develop subject-specific knowledge and skills. The curriculum is very well enhanced by school trips and residential visits, and by a broad range of extra-curricular clubs.
- Governors are reflective and know the school well. They have undergone a restructuring process which has increased their effectiveness so they better hold school leaders to account. However, their understanding of information about pupils' progress is less secure than their grasp of attainment data.
- The school makes good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils' good behaviour around school and on the playground reflects the school's ethos of care and respect for all.
- Overall rates of attendance are broadly average and are rising. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the improvements in writing evident in key stage 1 are effectively built upon in key stage 2, so that a greater proportion of pupils leave Year 6 achieving at the expected standard and at greater depth in writing.
- Ensure that the effective use of assessment in the Reception classes is reflected throughout early years in order to increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development.
- Raise governors' expectations of what constitutes good progress for pupils, so that they can use this information to hold school leaders to account with increasing rigour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have steered the school through a period of turbulence since the previous inspection. The rapid increase in pupil numbers, construction of the new building and difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff have all proved significant challenges, and have had a negative impact on overall standards. However, leaders' persistence and determination has paid off. They have now stabilised staffing and put systems in place that are proving successful in raising standards and securing consistently effective teaching across the school.
- The role of the school's highly focused phase leaders is central to improvements in teaching and outcomes in key stages 1 and 2. They work alongside class teachers to develop the quality of teaching and ensure that teachers new to the school, and to the profession, settle in quickly. The phase leaders also deliver additional support sessions to key groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able. The school's assessment data confirms that this has a positive impact on these pupils' progress.
- The use of the phase leaders to model and support teaching is typical of the school's pro-active approach to professional development. Teachers appreciate the development opportunities that they have, including attending well-chosen training courses and working with teachers from other local schools to share good practice and moderate judgements. Staff morale in the school is high.
- There is no doubting leaders' commitment to the school, and the highly positive responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, confirm the high regard that parents have for them. Leaders are ambitious for the pupils at Dee Point, and staff and governors would also say that they want the best for the pupils. However, not all staff and governors wholly recognise pupils' full potential in terms of progress and attainment and so their expectations are not as high as they could be.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, and ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. A culture of respect for all permeates the school, and pupils speak confidently about the importance of tolerance and understanding of people's differences. Attractive displays around the school further reflect the work that has been done to teach pupils about democracy and to develop their appreciation of cultural diversity.
- The school's curriculum is broad and engaging and effectively enables pupils to develop subject-specific skills and knowledge in areas such as science, geography and history. For example, pupils learn the value of artefacts in history, plan their own scientific experiments and develop increasingly complex mapping skills in geography. Educational visits are regularly used to enhance pupils' learning, and pupils particularly enjoy the chances they are given to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities and residential trips.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding. The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is used to provide pupils with access to a wide range of sporting activities in school time and as part of the school's very impressive extra-curricular offer. Pupil premium funding is used to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils' academic needs, and is also targeted at improving their

attendance. Strategies such as providing a breakfast club for these pupils have brought about a rise in disadvantaged pupils' attendance so that it is now better than that of other pupils in the school.

- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good, and ensures that funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well. This group of pupils, including those in the resource base, make typically good progress from their starting points.
- The school also works very effectively with a network of schools located within the local area, arranging professional development activities and sharing best practice. The local authority also provides a balance of support and challenge for school leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors have taken a purposeful and proactive approach to improving their effectiveness, having recognised that the school was going through an extremely challenging period. More regular governing body meetings, and a greater role for link governors, have increased governors' involvement in the school and provided more opportunities for them to challenge school leaders.
- Minutes of governors' meetings show clearly that they are now holding school leaders to account more sharply, for example over rates of attendance. This is contributing to the ongoing improvements that can be seen in the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of attainment information, and recognise that the school has not been performing as well as it could in relation to other schools locally and nationally. However, their understanding of information about pupils' progress is not as strong, and thus their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are not consistently high enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school provides high-quality support for vulnerable pupils and families through its family support and pastoral team. High levels of care and nurture are central to the school's ethos, and the school works exceptionally well with parents to make sure that all pupils are safe. Parents' very high levels of support for the school, and appreciation of the work that it does, are illustrated in the responses to Parent View. All of the respondents said that their children were safe and well looked after in school, and all would recommend the school to other parents.
- The headteacher ensures that thorough checks are made on staff, governors and regular visitors to the school to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children. The school maintains detailed records of these checks.
- School leaders ensure that staff and governors receive regular training so that their understanding of best practice in safeguarding is up to date. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil's welfare and there are excellent systems in place to ensure that any concerns are carefully recorded and quickly acted upon. Leaders have also established effective working relationships with a range of external agencies to

ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have worked successfully to overcome staffing difficulties and to now ensure that teaching across the school is effective. Teachers typically have good subject knowledge and use questions to good effect to check what pupils know and don't know. Clear systems for long- and short-term planning, particularly in mathematics and English, ensure that there is a consistent approach which enables teachers new to the school to settle in quickly.
- The teaching of phonics has improved and is now very effective, leading to a healthy rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in the past two years. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of phonics, and the school's consistent approach to teaching phonics from early years upwards ensures that pupils make strong progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils learn to read and appreciate different genres of text, and to write in different styles, through an integrated and focused approach to English teaching. Pupils develop an appreciation of the effect an author is trying to create through a choice of words or grammatical style, such as using short sentences to build up tension. They then begin to practise these skills within their own writing. However, while pupils' achievement in writing is clearly improving in key stage 1, improvements in key stage 2 are less secure. This is because, due to historically weaker teaching, pupils have some gaps in their learning and many are still heavily reliant on their teacher's support when writing.
- Mathematics is taught effectively across the school. Pupils learn to work confidently with numbers and place value, and they develop a good level of mathematical fluency. Teachers provide them with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to problem-solving tasks, and challenge pupils to use their reasoning skills to explain how they have arrived at an answer. There are also good examples of mathematics being developed effectively in other areas of the curriculum, such as in drawing charts and graphs in geography.
- There is good support across the school for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, or who are in danger of falling behind. This includes pupils who attend the resource base, where skilled staff ensure that pupils' academic and pastoral needs are recognised and met so that they are able to make typically good progress from their different starting points.
- Support for the most able pupils in the school is improving, and is having a positive impact on their progress. This can be seen in the upward trend in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards or working at greater depth at the end of key stages 1 and 2, and in the impressive improvements in most-able pupils' written work evident for pupils currently in Years 1 and 2.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Strong pastoral systems support all of the work that the school does. Pupils newly arrived in school are very well cared for so that they settle into school quickly and happily. Staff know pupils well and so potential barriers to learning are swiftly spotted and appropriate support put in place.
- The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when using the internet. Work done in school is backed up by useful information for parents on the school's website, such as advice about 'gaming and console safety'. The school also ensures that pupils are aware of different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying. Pupils have no concerns about bullying and say that they feel safe and well looked after in school.
- The school promotes healthy living well. Very good use is made of the additional funding for PE and sport, meaning that pupils have access to a wide variety of healthy, sporty activities ranging from football and hockey to yoga and dodgeball. Pupils also benefit from being able to choose from the 'healthy tuck shop' at breaktime.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning, and learn to work well both cooperatively and on their own. Occasionally, though, particularly when faced with a writing task, some pupils lack the confidence to write without their teachers' support.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show a clear pride in their new school building, which provides a very attractive learning environment. Their conduct in school is good as they walk round the corridors and up the stairs sensibly, politely holding doors open for visitors. At breaktimes pupils play well together, making good use of the extensive and well-equipped grounds.
- Pupils say behaviour is typically good in their school. They particularly like the clear system that the school has in place to reward good behaviour. Pupils say that staff deal quickly and effectively with any instances of poor behaviour. Leaders provide effective support for those pupils who otherwise struggle to manage their own behaviour. They are happy to innovate when looking for ways to maintain a calm and stress-free environment, such as through hand-massage and the work of Cooper, the therapy dog.
- In class, pupils listen well to their teachers and to their classmates and are happy to answer questions and listen to other pupils' replies and ideas. They settle quickly to the activities that teachers have set for them and typically focus well on their learning.
- School leaders have addressed the issue of frequent absences and low levels of attendance with focus and determination. Their work is having a positive impact and rates of attendance and persistent absence at the school are now broadly in line with other schools nationally and continuing to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Following the school's last inspection there was a steep drop in standards of attainment at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils' progress across key stage 2 had also declined sharply and was typically well below national average. Too few pupils were reaching the higher standards or working at greater depth and scores in the Year 1 phonics screening check were largely below those of other schools nationally.
- Senior leaders want pupils to achieve highly during their time at Dee Point, and were disappointed by this decline. They have taken decisive and largely effective action to address standards issues, and the picture for the great majority of pupils in the school is now far more positive.
- In the unvalidated data for 2018, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 had improved markedly to be broadly in line with the national average. However, pupils' previous underachievement meant that standards of attainment in key stage 2 remained below the national average from 2017, particularly in writing. The work of current pupils in key stage 2 confirms that improvements are continuing but shows also that many older pupils are still catching up following previously weaker achievement.
- In key stage 1 in 2018, attainment rose in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics attainment was broadly similar to the national average from 2017. Standards in writing, although improving, were not as strong. However, evidence in pupils' books shows that the quality of pupils' writing in key stage 1 is now improving rapidly.
- Pupils' scores in the Year 1 phonics screening check have risen in the last two years so that in 2018 more than nine out of every 10 pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard. This further illustrates the ongoing improvement in outcomes in key stage 1.
- The proportion of most-able pupils reaching the higher standard or working at greater depth at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is also increasing overall, particularly in mathematics and reading. It is lower in writing, although younger pupils' books show that a greater proportion within key stage 1 are now beginning to write at greater depth.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are also now improving, although, like other pupils in the school, measures of their progress in key stage 2 are currently stronger than their attainment. Highly focused support from the key stage phase leaders is an important factor in the improvements in progress for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who work in the resource base, typically make good progress from their different starting points because they are well supported and work is well matched to their learning needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the Nursery class at Dee Point with levels of skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. A further large group of children join the school at the start of Reception and they too have skills and knowledge that are less well developed than could be expected for their age. Staff skilfully ensure that children settle into the well-established routines in early years quickly, which creates a calm and welcoming environment.
- Having managed with very little outdoor space while the new school building was being

built, staff have enthusiastically developed the outdoor learning area that they now have. The learning environment inside and outside in both Nursery and Reception is attractive and well organised.

- Behaviour in early years is good. Adults have a consistent approach to behaviour management, which children respond to very well. Children are clear about the expectations around behaviour and even the youngest, many only recently started in Nursery, behave well.
- Staff interact well with children, speaking to them clearly and modelling correct spoken language. This helps the children to settle and feel safe in early years, and also supports their language development.
- Effective and well-targeted teaching of phonics in the Reception classes ensures that children get off to a good start with developing their phonic knowledge. This is one important factor in the improvements in phonics outcomes seen in the annual Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Leaders have an honest and accurate view of standards in early years. In 2018, only half of the children in Reception class reached a good level of development. Although this figure was disappointing, leaders were able to show that progress being made by children in the early years had improved in the past year, particularly in Reception class. Staff in Reception class use assessment information particularly effectively to move children's learning forward. The early years leader, who is an experienced and effective practitioner, is now working to ensure that this effective use of assessment is more closely mirrored in Nursery so that progress across the whole of early years is further strengthened.

School details

Unique reference number	111218
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10032812

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Layla Johnson
Headteacher	Dave Williams
Telephone number	01244 372631
Website	www.deepointprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@deepointprimary.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2013

Information about this school

- Dee Point is a much larger than average sized school. Since the previous inspection the school has almost doubled in size, from one to two forms of entry. The school has also moved into a new building, which was built on the site of the old school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is double the national average.
- The school is funded by the local authority to provide up to 10 additional places in a resource base for pupils who have a range of SEN and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities across the school and the proportion of those pupils who have education, health and care plans are both above average.
- The school has experienced some turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection. A number of middle leaders are relatively new to post.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. They also looked at pupils' work in books, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors met a group of pupils and talked informally with pupils around the school. They took into account 98 responses the Parent View survey.
- Inspectors met a group of four governors, including the chair of the governing body. They had discussions with staff in the school, including the leaders responsible for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and staff responsible for overseeing pastoral care and safeguarding. Inspectors also met the leader for the early years, the phase leaders responsible for key stage 1 and upper and lower key stage 2 and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance and records of meetings of the governing body. They also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

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Kathleen McArthur	Ofsted Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Adrian Martin	Ofsted Inspector

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