

# Lark Hall Community Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124134
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380810
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clive Lewis

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Garry Hiron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Rosegreen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Clifton Avenue Tamworth B79 8EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01827 475720
<b>Fax number</b>	01827 475720
<b>Email address</b>	office@larkhall.staffs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Lewis

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by an additional inspector, who observed six lessons. All teachers and support staff were seen working with pupils. A group of pupils read to the inspector and lessons reinforcing the sounds letters represent (phonics) were observed across the school. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and members of staff. Questionnaires from 50 parents and carers were analysed. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, looked at documentation including teachers' planning documents, and examined tracking and assessment data.

## Information about the school

Lark Hall is a smaller-than-average infant school. Pupils are taught in four classes, a mornings-only Nursery class, a Reception class and two mixed Year 1/2 classes. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Lark Hall is a good school. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, it has recovered well from disruptions to staffing since the previous inspection. The school plays a central part within the community and is greatly valued by parents and carers. The school is not outstanding because pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading, and the outdoor curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is limited.
- Progress throughout the school is good. Children's attainment on entry is well below expectations for their age. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in most areas of learning although levels of attainment remain below average on entry to Year 1. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 so that, when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2, attainment is in line with the national average. Although good progress has been made in improving standards of reading, attainment in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics, because pupils have too few opportunities to write in other subjects.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Attendance levels have improved considerably and are now average. This is because rigorous systems ensure prompt responses to any absence.
- Attainment has improved significantly over the past year after a temporary dip in 2011 caused by changes in staffing and essential revisions made to the school's assessment and tracking systems. The school has recovered well, maintaining the previous trend of good progress by managing performance well. Teaching across the school is well led and is good overall. Good curricular enrichment makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, children in Nursery and Reception have too few opportunities to learn outdoors when the weather is bad.

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

- Improve standards in writing, so that they match those achieved in reading, by providing more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across a range

of subjects.

- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make full use of the outdoor areas throughout the year.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

All groups of pupils make good progress, whatever their background, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. All adults pay very close attention to pupils' individual needs and quickly identify those who may show any delay in learning. They provide good support, matched to these needs, including through the very good links they have with external health agencies. This ensures, in particular, that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well.

Children typically start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and capabilities well below those expected for their ages, particularly in their communication, language, number and personal skills. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the strong and consistent focus on developing key reading, writing and number skills, and on improving children's personal development. However, attainment remains below average when pupils enter Year 1 because of their low starting points. This good progress continues as they move through Key Stage 1 and overall attainment, by the time pupils leave the school, is broadly in line with national averages. Daily phonics lessons and regular guided-reading activities ensure reading is taught well and consistently across the school. As a result, attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national averages, as it is in mathematics. However, few pupils achieve the higher levels in writing. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress and inspection findings support their views.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall, and this is reflected in the good progress shown in pupils' books. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and this was confirmed by inspection findings and by pupils who said they found lessons 'fun'. Teachers ensure classroom routines are made clear and are regularly reinforced. Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely good and pupils demonstrate positive behaviour and good attitudes to work in lessons. Learning is structured carefully and all pupils contribute to lessons. In the best cases, teachers generate high levels of enthusiasm for learning among pupils. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding through skilled questioning, anticipating when they need to intervene to support or challenge. In one good Year 1/2 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge, skilled lesson management and high expectations of work and behaviour. A brisk pace was set, pupils knew precisely what they were expected to do and, as a result, were well-motivated. They made good progress in their understanding of how to improve their writing by the use of

'wow' words and consistent punctuation. The teacher was particularly effective in ensuring pupils had a good understanding of the progress they had made in the lesson and how they could improve further. However, pupils do not make good progress in writing overall, because teachers provide too few opportunities for them to write in different subjects.

Teachers have a good understanding of the progress that pupils are making in literacy and mathematics due to the regular analysis of assessment and tracking data and meetings to discuss individuals' progress, which take place every term. Marking is of a consistently good quality, leading to good levels of engagement from the pupils. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and this is built on successfully and consistently through Years 1 and 2. In Reception and Nursery, teachers plan brisk, animated daily phonics activities for children which interest and motivate them, and contribute well to the good progress made in their reading and listening skills. All staff monitor and record children's progress effectively on a day-to-day basis and observations and achievements are recorded in individual children's profiles.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Observations during lessons and around the school confirm that pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils show good levels of engagement, courtesy, collaboration and cooperation in and out of lessons. Pupils confirm that behaviour is good and say that, although there are sometimes minor arguments in the playground, 'it's not really bullying'. School records confirm that this good standard of behaviour has been maintained over time. Parents and carers also say that they believe pupils behave well and are safe in school.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their much-improved levels of attendance, which are now average. They show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others and most have mature attitudes to learning. They develop considerate relationships with peers and adults. All groups of pupils say they feel safe at school at all times. They understand what constitutes unsafe situations and are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils willingly take up a good range of opportunities to contribute to school and local communities, through the work of the school council and regular collections for a number of charities. They take on responsibility conscientiously, and play a constructive role in the school. Through the school council, they are beginning to have some influence on decisions about school life. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage clearly enjoy school and have settled into routines well, playing happily both together and individually, indoors and out.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, with the full support of the governing body and the local authority, has successfully overcome considerable turbulence in staffing and has significantly strengthened the accuracy and rigour of the school's assessment and tracking systems. She has consistently communicated and maintained her high expectations and ambition for the school to colleagues. As a result, she has ensured that the school is now back on track and improving rapidly. She is fully supported in this by a

team of highly committed staff, ensuring that momentum for improvement is maintained. Staff regularly take advantage of helpful professional opportunities to enhance their work, reflected in the good quality of their classroom practice.

Equal opportunities are at the heart of the school's ethos and all staff show a very strong commitment to equality and combating discrimination, celebrating the individual qualities of each pupil and family very well. The school's revised and strengthened monitoring and evaluation procedures successfully drive improvement. Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school and are becoming much more effective in holding it to account. Under the leadership of the headteacher, they have developed a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop.

The curriculum rightly focuses strongly on improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and personal skills but, in addition, ensures pupils receive a rich and creative mix of activities which meets their needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. However, outdoor learning for children in Nursery and Reception does not happen often enough if the weather is bad. Pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through regular visits and visitors to school. The school's excellent and much-improved relationships with parents and carers ensure the personal and emotional needs of the children are addressed exceptionally well. One parent wrote, 'Both of my children have settled into the school extremely well and their potential is recognised and encouraged; the teachers really want to make a difference and have the passion to drive the school in the right direction.' Inspection findings endorse the views of parents and carers. Resources are well deployed. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and policies are comprehensive. Meticulously-followed procedures ensure pupils are protected and supported very effectively. There are excellent links with a range of external agencies which contribute well to pupils' progress. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Its track record in overcoming significant difficulties since its previous inspection and maintaining the long-term trend of good progress demonstrate it has a good capacity to improve further.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Lark Hall Community Infant School, Tamworth, B79 8EF**

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. I very much enjoyed my visit. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to as many of you as I could. You attend a good, very happy and friendly school which is led well by the headteacher and the staff. They care for you well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this well. You told me that you really like your school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. Good teaching is a feature of your school and this, combined with exciting curriculum activities and your hard work, results in you making good progress. You make a good contribution to the life of your school through the responsibilities you take on and through your school council. Your behaviour is good and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do. Well done!

You told us that you really enjoy school and are proud to attend. To help you to make even better progress, we have asked the school to:

- work to improve your writing by giving you more chances to practice your writing in other lessons such as geography, history and science
- find ways of ensuring the youngest children are able to work and play in their outdoor areas throughout the year, whatever the weather.

You too can contribute to the further improvement of your school by continuing to attend with the same positive attitudes and willingness that you show at the moment. I wish you well in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis  
Lead Inspector

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