

Leasowes Primary School

Porlock Avenue, Weeping Cross, Stafford, ST17 0HT

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have ensured the school has improved on several fronts since the previous inspection, especially in ensuring that teaching is highly effective.
- Senior leaders lead by example. Relentless in their drive for further improvement, they and the governing body robustly support and improve teachers' performance and pupils' learning.
- All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are highly motivated. Achievement is excellent because almost all pupils consistently make expected or better progress in English and mathematics.
- Attainment is well above average and has been for several years. One reason for this is the outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Very skilled teachers constantly support and challenge pupils to achieve their best. All staff readily rise to the high expectations their leaders have of them.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are highly supportive of each other. They feel very safe in school and thoroughly enjoy learning. Attendance is above average.
- Subjects provide pupils with many memorable experiences. However, with the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff sometimes miss opportunities to use the area around the school effectively to promote learning, especially writing, even more.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- The 35 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, and inspectors met with several parents to seek their views at first hand.
- The school's work was observed and a wide range of documents was examined, including data on current pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also observed play and lunch times and spoke with a good number of pupils about behaviour and safety over time. They held more formal meetings with three groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and staff with key management responsibilities.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
David Westall	Additional inspector
Richard Boswell	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, are all below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- It has achieved Healthy Schools status, Dyslexia Friendly status, and the International Schools (Foundation Level) award.
- There is a before- and after-school club on site that is not managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make even more effective use of the local environment, particularly around the school, as a stimulus for learning, and especially to provide meaningful contexts for writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is outstanding**

- Children start school with skills that are typical for their age. Supported by skilful teaching, they very quickly acquire knowledge and develop their understanding in a wide range of imaginative activities. Pupils make rapid and sustained progress across the school and in different subjects, where they use and further develop their literacy and numeracy skills, resulting in attainment that is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics is much higher than the national figure. Pupils' ability to link letters and sounds to help them read, write and spell, is excellent. However, in Year 1, too much breaking down of words sometimes detracts from the flow of their reading.
- From an early age, pupils read widely, enjoy reading, and communicate well with others. They use their well-developed vocabulary to present their views clearly and to show they understand what they are learning and why, and how to improve on it.
- Writing skills are much improved since the previous inspection. The gaps between different groups of pupils are narrowing rapidly as the school finds more imaginative contexts for writing. For example, Year 6 pupils greatly improved their writing after being taken outdoors to stimulate their imagination. However, the use of the local environment to promote learning is not fully embedded throughout the school.
- Pupils successfully acquire the logical thinking and the skills needed to solve mathematical problems. This was very evident in Years 5 and 6, where they persevered with very challenging work and used their excellent knowledge of different methods of calculation to reach their solutions.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as the few pupils supported by the pupil premium, also make rapid progress. The very effective support they receive ensures that any gaps in their learning are quickly picked up and, in most cases, closed by the time they leave the school. All pupils leave this school exceptionally well prepared for their future, academically and socially.

The quality of teaching **is outstanding**

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' learning and behaviour. They ensure that every pupil has an equal chance to succeed. Pupils' work is planned very effectively to provide the right level of challenge for each individual.
- Typically, learning moves at a brisk pace because teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to question and probe pupils' thinking and spur them on to learn more. This was noted, for example, in English and mathematics lessons across the school, and in the way pupils' interest was captured in a Year 6 art lesson.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective. Skills are taught in discrete lessons and fostered across the curriculum. The move to one book for all writing is proving to be an effective way of ensuring pupils use, and teachers mark, writing skills well at all times.
- High quality assessment, marking and feedback during and between lessons mean pupils are always clear about what they do well and how to improve. Pupils are also taught how to assess their own and others' work. They talk knowledgeably about their targets and how to

achieve them, and appreciate how all of this helps to accelerate their learning.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well taught. Teaching assistants are well trained and well briefed. They work closely with teachers to provide the pupils with well-targeted support.
- Excellent relationships enable teachers to draw pupils into discussions that make a particularly good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, accept that actions have consequences, work with others and accept them regardless of background or ability.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school does everything in its power to foster good behaviour and encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the class and school charters and how everyone deserves an equal chance. They are very proud of their school and thoroughly enjoy being there, as their above average attendance shows.
- Pupils are very keen to do well. They say that they can 'count on the staff' for help with anything and, 'Teachers take the time to get things ready for us, so we have to do our bit to do our best.' Their attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Pupils feel the school helps them to manage and control their own behaviour, and they are right. When any low-level disruption does occur, teachers have swift and effective strategies to deal with it so that it does not interfere with learning.
- Pupils know what bullying is and what to do about it. They say persistently threatening behaviour, including, for example, name-calling or physical violence is very rare. They say that on the odd occasion it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Almost all parents agree, saying their children 'arrive happy and leave happy' each day.
- Through the school- and eco-councils, and the many opportunities to share their views with staff, pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school. They also reach out to the community, raising funds for various charities at home and abroad, welcoming the community into the school and taking part in community events.
- Pupils are highly aware of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, including when using the internet, a mobile phone or accessing a social networking site.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The local authority provides light-touch support for this outstanding school.
- Highly ambitious leadership is reflected at all levels of management. In particular, the senior leadership team demonstrates undoubted expertise in sustaining and improving further the already high standard of teaching and learning observed throughout the school.
- Extremely strong management of teachers' performance and the well-developed programme for staff training ensure continuous improvement. The checks made on teaching, including the work of support staff, are sharply focused and give staff clear guidance on how to improve. Teachers benefit from them and from the astute guidance they receive to accelerate pupils' progress.
- There is no hint of complacency in this school. Established teachers continually strive for

improvement and teachers new to the school are quickly introduced to the school's high expectations. Frequent meetings between staff and senior leaders identify and tackle any underperformance highlighted by the outcomes of the well-established systems for checking the progress of different groups of pupils.

- Subject leaders for English and mathematics provide excellent support for staff in ensuring pupils have extensive opportunities to read, write and use their mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. Other leaders are working effectively with staff on measuring progress in different subjects.
 - The exceptionally well-planned curriculum stimulates pupils' curiosity and provides many opportunities for high quality learning. Art, music and sport have a high profile within the curriculum and in the wide range of activities outside lessons. This all contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good balance between participation and competitive sport motivates pupils to join in as many activities as possible.
 - The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles all forms of discrimination robustly. As a result, pupils understand from an early age that 'we are all the same', 'people have the right to be different if they want', and 'nobody should make fun of anybody else'.
 - The school's international work gives pupils a good awareness of global issues and of different cultures.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - challenges and supports senior leaders through carrying out a wide range of activities to gain first-hand information, leading to accurate and well-founded self-evaluation and well-considered priorities in the school improvement plan
 - is vigilant in ensuring all policies and procedures are up-to-date so that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131568
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	403635

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Jeff Smith
Headteacher	Fergus Rule
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
Telephone number	01785 356365
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