

Congerstone Primary School

Shackerstone Road, Congerstone, Nuneaton, CV13 6NH

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership to sustain good teaching and has sharpened teachers' use of assessment to check how well pupils are learning.
- Pupils achieve well. They reach standards that are well above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment and progress is improving well in all year groups.
- Children get off to an excellent start in Reception. This provides a very strong foundation for their learning, particularly in early reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who find learning difficult or who have special educational needs are given effective support. The teaching of reading and phonics (the sounds that letters make) is particularly good for these and other pupils.
- The teaching is nearly always good and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers provide practical and engaging lessons for pupils.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and form trusting and positive relationships with other pupils and staff. They enjoy school very much and this is reflected in high attendance rates.
- There is good and effective leadership and governance. Teachers responsible for managing subjects or year groups are good at checking pupils' work and progress. Governors are effective and actively involved in both supporting and holding the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have clear learning targets to aim for, or enough guidance to help them understand what they have to do next to reach higher levels.
- In some lessons, teachers do not plan additional tasks to extend learning or the right level of work to challenge all pupils.
- Parents and carers are not given enough information about their children's progress or guidance about how homework is supporting learning in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 12 parts of lessons and 10 were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. All teachers and some teaching assistants were observed.
- The inspector heard a group of pupils read and scrutinised workbooks from all classes.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and the inspector spoke to some parents and carers. The inspector also spoke with the local authority's school improvement partner by telephone.
- The inspector took account of the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the school's surveys of parents' views and some letters addressed to the inspector.
- Questionnaire responses from 15 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils.
- The school's development plan and self-evaluation were scrutinised, and the inspector checked the records that leaders and teachers use to assess pupils' learning and progress.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a small school compared with most primary schools nationally. It serves a wide rural area and pupils come from a large number of surrounding villages.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class for four-year-olds.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number come from other minority ethnic groups, including African, Pakistani, Indian or mixed heritage. All pupils speak English as their main language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is low compared with most schools (this is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care).
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average (those supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs). The main areas of additional need include moderate or specific learning difficulties, such as speech, language or communication.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher joined the school in May 2011 and there have been significant staff changes and governor appointments since the school's last inspection in 2008.
- The school has received a number of national awards, including Healthy Schools, the Active Mark, and it is an Eco school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teachers provide the right level of challenge for pupils in all lessons by:
 - setting learning targets for each pupil to aim for with clear guidance about the steps needed to reach these targets
 - planning tasks and work at different levels that meet the needs and abilities of all pupils
 - giving pupils more time to check, self-correct and improve the quality of their work, and more tasks to extend their learning and help them reach higher levels.
- Provide parents and carers with more information about their children's progress and the attainment levels they reach, including guidance that explains how homework is supporting pupils' learning in school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. National test results for Year 6 in 2012, although unvalidated, show that pupils' attainment reached levels that were the equivalent of more than one school term ahead of most Year 6 pupils nationally.
- Most Reception children start school with skills and abilities that are just above those expected for their age, particularly in language, vocabulary and social skills. Consistently strong teaching and support enables the children to make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. By the time children start Year 1, the majority reach levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above those expected of five-year-olds.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress, building on the strong foundations in Reception. The teaching of reading and phonics is strong, enabling most pupils in Year 1 to read and write independently. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected compares favourably with national figures. This is a result of mainly good teaching and teachers' much improved use of assessment to check that pupils are doing as well as they should. Good achievement includes all pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Achievement is not outstanding because some pupils just fall short of their expected levels. Learning targets are not always made clear to pupils or linked specifically to National Curriculum levels. This slows the progress of some because pupils are unsure about the small steps they need to take to reach their targets or higher levels. Teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils last year, for example, show that some more-able pupils just fell short of the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics.
- Additional support time funded by pupil premium money is put to very good use and helps pupils who lack the skills or confidence to read and write accurately to catch up. Nearly all pupils eligible for this funding reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in reading and writing.
- Pupils with disabilities or who have special educational needs achieve well. The combination of good teaching and the support managed by the special educational needs teacher means that pupils who find learning difficult or have specific learning difficulties soon gain the confidence and skills they need to read and write independently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make learning interesting by linking English and mathematics work to exciting practical topics across a range of subjects. This includes stimulating science topics and information and communication technology using computers, smart boards and calculators.
- Teachers are good at asking questions and encourage pupils to share ideas with others or generate suggestions with a 'talk partner'. Workbooks include useful prompts, reminders or targets to support pupils' learning, but some targets are too broad or unclear so pupils find it difficult to see the steps they need to go through to reach higher levels.

- Teachers are successful in encouraging pupils to be inquisitive and independent learners. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils made excellent progress in reading and writing using literature from their history topic on the Second World War. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were inspired by the opportunities to write imaginative poems about fireworks. They experimented with similar sounding words to produce rhyming couplets that also improved their spelling.
- Pupils do well in mathematics because teachers provide them with good opportunities to apply calculation skills to a range of interesting real-life problems. Some outstanding teaching helped pupils in Year 6 make rapid progress investigating the most efficient ways of calculation when experimenting with factors, multiples and different methods of multiplication and division.
- The teaching is not outstanding because some lessons start with work that the pupils can do too easily so have missed the opportunity to start with more challenging work. A small amount of teaching requires improvement as it lacks pace and challenge. Learning slows when tasks do not expect enough of all pupils.
- The headteacher and school leaders have improved assessment so that the records kept about pupils' learning and progress are more accessible and accurate than at the time of the last inspection. This helps teachers to check, with increasing accuracy, that pupils are making enough progress.
- The most effective teaching gives pupils enough time to self-correct, learn through trial and error, or opportunities to work with an adult to improve their work, but this is not yet common in all lessons. Some teaching assistants are very much involved in the teaching and skilfully intervene to improve pupils' learning, but this is not consistent in some classes.
- The recently introduced marking policy provides visual prompts for pupils to check their work and is starting to be used consistently in all classes. However, workbooks show that some pupils make repeated spelling errors or uncorrected mistakes with number calculations because they are not prompted enough to correct their work.
- Pupils make better progress in lessons where teachers and support staff intervene if pupils make mistakes or encourage them to correct their work while the activity is fresh in pupils' minds.
- Outstanding teaching in Reception provides a stimulating range of challenging activities for children to choose. A group was observed using building blocks to design and build habitats for their toy animals, an activity that was difficult and challenging. This encouraged the children to work cooperatively and explain why, for example, the 'crocodiles were surrounded by a fence to keep the other animals safe.'
- Pupils enjoy doing extra work at home, including the recently introduced 'My Style' homework that encourages independent and personalised learning. Some parents and carers have rightly pointed out that the school is not yet providing sufficient guidance about how their children's homework contributes to learning in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. They cooperate well in lessons and help each other. These characteristics make an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Even though most pupils come from a wide catchment area in this rural school, they say that it is easy to make friends.

- Pupils respond exceptionally well to learning in lessons. They are keen to answer questions or contribute to group or class discussions. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 thrived on the opportunity to share ideas when planning how best to write a persuasive argument for and against school uniform.
- Break times are enjoyable and enable pupils to socialise and form friendships. Pupils say they trust the adults who care for them, including those who supervise them at lunchtimes. There are warm and positive relationships amongst pupils and with adults.
- The school is successful in tackling any form of discrimination in a cohesive and supportive school community. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Specially themed topics and visits improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions that exist in the United Kingdom today.
- Teachers and support staff work effectively with pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour or who have emotional difficulties. Lessons are rarely disrupted and pupils have said that if any of their classmates misbehave, then this is dealt with very well and sensitively.
- The staff provide excellent pastoral care and welfare to ensure that pupils are safe and happy in school. This is why nearly all pupils who spoke to the inspector said that what they liked most about school was their teachers and support staff. The inspector spoke with many parents and carers who confirmed that this is one of the primary reasons why they chose this school for their children. Attendance rates are very high and there are no records of exclusions over the last ten years.
- Pupils learn a lot about staying safe and healthy. Older pupils were able to explain to the inspector the precautions they need to take when using computers, including the use of online messaging websites. The school's records indicate that bullying seldom occurs and pupils know what to do if it does. All those spoken to believe that staff deal very well with any rare disagreements, incidents of name-calling or times when pupils upset others.
- Pupils enjoy school and learning very much because of the variety of activities the school offers that encourages them to be healthy, safe and active. Early morning sports clubs and after-school events, musical ensembles and the performing and creative arts make a significant contribution to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has done a great deal since her appointment in May 2011 to sharpen how well teachers use assessment and has made teachers more accountable for their performance and the progress of the pupils they teach. The school's improvement plan is sharp with clear measures of success from which to monitor and gauge how well teachers and pupils are doing.
- Leaders and governors have evaluated the effectiveness of the school accurately. Following a brief decline in standards in 2010, the school has reversed this trend so that pupils now achieve standards and make progress that compare favourably with national expectations.
- Despite staff changes since the last inspection, the school has coped very well to minimise any potential disruption to school improvement. The uplift in pupils' achievement is mainly due to the headteacher's strong leadership, good and improving teaching, accurate assessments and the effective professional development of staff. This demonstrates that leaders and governors have

good capacity to sustain improvements and develop more outstanding teaching.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work with governors to check pupils' work and teachers' performance. They observe lessons and set specific performance targets for all staff linked to how well pupils are doing. This level of scrutiny is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Leadership is not outstanding because there remains some teaching that requires improvement and there is not enough more widespread teaching that is of outstanding quality.
- Nearly all members of staff have reported in the inspection survey and during discussions with the inspector that they are improving their skills and expertise. The response from staff also shows that staff morale is high and that there is a shared vision to improve the school.
- Pupils are provided with a varied programme of subjects that help them contribute to their local and wider community. This includes outdoor residential or day visits and good opportunities to engage in interesting Eco projects on the sustainable use of resources in the local environment.
- Teachers manage and plan stimulating topics for pupils to study that draw together different subjects, and pupils are taught a modern foreign language (French) that extends their use of language and vocabulary. In addition, pupils benefit enormously from the extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, peripatetic music tuition, charitable fund-raising, swimming and competitive sport. These make an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support for this good school. Leaders have fully utilised the services of the local authority's school improvement partner who has provided effective support to help staff and governors improve their knowledge and use of assessment. There is a strong local partnership with other small schools as well as links with schools in the local area that are used well for staff professional development and training.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed exceptionally well and all the parents and carers spoken to confirmed this. There are precise evaluations of children's progress and performance laying strong foundations for their future learning.
- The large majority of parents and carers spoken to or who completed the online inspection survey believe that the school is well led and managed. Some would like more information about their children's learning and progress, particularly the levels their children reach. The inspector agrees that this is currently lacking and would contribute towards improving parents' and carers' understanding of the progress their children are making.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are rigorous and diligent in checking to make sure that they have first-hand evidence of pupils' and teachers' performance. The governing body has produced a perceptive evaluation and action plan that identifies the right priorities for improvement. Governors have made a realistic assessment of the school's budget and have managed this carefully to ensure that staffing is sustainable, including the effective deployment of pupil premium funding. Governors and the headteacher have well-established and robust procedures for managing the performance of staff and these are linked very well to salary progression and the deployment of additional management responsibilities. Governors, leaders and administrative staff ensure that all safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements, including robust staff vetting procedures.

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	119949
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	395664

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Fraser
Headteacher	Alison Ruff
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2008
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