

Littleton Green Community School

Colliers Way, Huntington, Cannock, WS12 4UD

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over time, attainment has been persistently below average because pupils have not made good progress.
- Pupils have not experienced enough good teaching, over an extended period of time.
- A minority of teachers do not ask questions that challenge pupils enough, particularly the most able. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to give extended responses, analyse text or critically evaluate ideas.
- Some teachers do not consistently ensure a rapid pace of learning, through competition or through the use of deadlines.
- In some year groups, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to make choices and work independently.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in determining the future direction of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are now making the progress they should and their attainment is rising because of major improvements to teaching and support that are plugging the gaps in their learning.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They show enthusiasm for learning because the majority of lessons begin in an interesting way.
- Leaders, including the governing body, demonstrate an ability to hold staff to account for the progress pupils make. As a result, the school is improving strongly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 16 lessons, all of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspector observed small-group and one-to-one sessions taking place outside of normal lessons.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to the online parents' questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including records of pupils' recent assessments and current progress, school development plans, governance, management of the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, checks on teaching, pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Kevin Sheldrick, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This school is an above-average sized primary school and is increasing in size as more children are joining in Reception.
- A well above average proportion of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for particular groups, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- No pupils are currently educated in alternative provision on other sites.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At its last section 5 inspection in February 2012, the school was judged to require special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers make more use of questions that challenge pupils, to analyse text in more depth, encourage more extended responses and require pupils to critically evaluate emerging ideas
 - teachers set deadlines that require pupils to work at a fast pace
 - pupils are clear about the learning that has taken place, have the opportunity to apply this to interesting problems and are aware of the next steps they need to take to move their learning on
 - learning is consistently linked to interesting practical situationspupils, particularly the more able, have increased opportunity to choose challenging activities and work independently.
- Sustain and accelerate the pace of improvement by ensuring that:
 - all parents are involved in supporting their child's learning, particularly through their regular involvement in setting and reviewing targets,
 - subject leaders are more involved in determining the future direction of the school
 - all governors are able to evaluate the school's effectiveness through analysing the pupils' attainment and progress information
 - the use of the school campus is further optimised.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- When they start school, children's attainment is below average. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is below average because pupils make only average progress.
- Pupils are making better progress than in the past in lessons because teaching has improved sharply. Pupils, particularly those that are lower attaining, are benefiting from an extensive programme of interventions outside of normal lessons.
- Although this better progress is not yet reflected in the standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, a higher proportion of pupils in all year groups are working at their expected National Curriculum levels. In many year groups, pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills are now closer to the average.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils are now making at least the progress they should, although this is not sufficient to overcome the weak progress they made during the years before the school was judged to require special measures.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is not quite as strong as that in Key Stage 2 because teaching is not as effective in this key stage. However, in all key stages there are occasions when pupils make very strong progress because teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium attain standards that are in line with those reached by other pupils. In the past, these pupils did not make sufficient progress. This is no longer the case because leaders are ensuring that these pupils benefit most from the support that is being provided.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least expected progress. Improvements to teaching have benefited these students. They are also gaining significantly from the interventions that are put in place when it is evident that pupils are falling below the National Curriculum levels associated with their age group.
- Pupils that participate in intervention groups, particularly those with special educational needs, make good progress because the activities are very accurately matched to their individual needs.
- Pupils are developing a good knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics), particularly in Reception. They enjoy the letters and sound lessons and feel very proud of their achievements.
- Reading has improved because pupils are encouraged to read widely and the school is devoting significant time to guided and paired reading.
- More-able pupils do not make quite as strong progress as do other pupils because they do not consistently have enough opportunities to choose more challenging activities, or to show that they have the skills to work on their own.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in subjects other than English and mathematics because the work is not always challenging enough.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although further improvements in teaching are needed, pupils are benefitting from an increasing amount of teaching that is good. They no longer experience any that is inadequate.
- Mathematics training for teachers has helped to bring about a more consistent approach to the teaching of calculations. Work with partner schools has improved the assessment of writing, and lessons are more focussed on what is required to improve this aspect.
- Teachers are taking steps to ensure that all pupils consider the questions they ask. However, too often one-word responses are accepted and more probing follow-up questions are not used to deepen learning. Only occasionally is it the case that pupils can critically evaluate emerging ideas.
- Pupils receive helpful written feedback and are consistently required to respond to this. In lessons, pupils do not always have the opportunity to consider what they have achieved or to apply their learning or to consider the next steps they need to take in order to move their learning on.
- In the most effective lessons, often involving older pupils, self- and peer-assessment using robust criteria is helping them to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly when pupils are able to make choices for themselves. Although work is usually planned for different ability groups, at times, pupils cannot move quickly enough on to work that is more challenging because they are not given sufficient choice.
- Where teaching is good, pupils' work is displayed to help clarify how problems can be solved and to motivate pupils to work harder. Steps are taken to ensure that pupils work at a good pace; for instance, pupils compete to see who can undertake the greatest number of calculations in a set time. However, in other lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers fail to lift the pace and do not praise pupils sufficiently for their efforts.
- In the very best lessons, pupils are inspired by teaching that makes the classroom come alive. For instance, pupils in Year 1 and 2 enjoyed using magnifying glasses to aid their work as 'plural detectives'. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 were highly intrigued by their mathematics learning because they were in the role of 'architects' designing a school. Teaching is less effective where learning takes place without reference to such interesting contexts.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a stimulating environment that changes regularly as new topics become a focus. Nursery children were observed greatly enjoying their role play as astronauts. Records of children's learning are greatly enhanced through the use of photographic evidence.
- Suitable adaptations are made so that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs can participate in lessons fully. Interventions are highly effective because teaching assistants are held to account for the progress pupils make. Sessions for these pupils are sharply focussed on the identified needs of individuals.
- Although there are strengths in how reading is promoted, opportunities are sometimes missed to probe pupils' understanding of what has been read.
- The school benefits from a modern new building set in a large campus. Leaders have recognised that this is currently under-used. For instance, it lacks covered areas that would improve the use of outdoor areas, including the woodland.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through their involvement in school improvement and participation in fundraising activities. A well-developed rewards system is promoting positive values. Links are often made to real-life examples to enhance learning. For instance, a very good discussion arose in a mathematics lesson where pupils had to think about the probability of Manchester United beating the local football club.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good because pupils are enjoying learning and the school's 'purple patch' reward system makes it very clear to pupils what is expected of them.
- Pupils and parents report that bullying is rare and any incidents that occur are dealt with in a highly efficient manner. This contributes to pupils feeling safe in the school. Pupils are aware of all the forms that bullying can take and know what to do if they have any concerns.
- Behaviour is well managed in lessons and around the school. Pupils appreciate the improvements at lunchtimes that have given them a choice of activities. One pupil captured the views of many in stating that, 'There is so much to do we do not have the time to misbehave.'
- Attendance is at the national average for all groups of pupils. The school has worked effectively with other local schools to pursue a 'zero tolerance' approach to absence caused through holidays taken during term time.
- Nursery children have quickly developed the social skills required so they can work well with others.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy the variety of activities they can undertake.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2, particularly those that are more able, do not have enough opportunities to learn independently.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders demonstrate the school's strong capacity to improve. In a short time, the senior leadership team, led by the school's headteacher, has improved the school in key areas. Noteworthy improvements to teaching have raised achievement levels and behaviour has been transformed since the school was last inspected.
- The local authority has supported the improvements in pupils' behaviour, staff's mathematics subject knowledge and in governance. It was also instrumental in enabling the school to benefit from a well-judged partnership with another successful local school.
- In order to bring about rapid improvement, senior leaders have adopted an uncompromising approach to dealing with inconsistencies, particularly with inadequate teaching. Despite challenging underperformance, senior leaders have maintained high levels of staff morale. Effective training has enabled staff to improve. Senior leaders have accelerated the rate of improvement by very effectively seeking insights into the best practice that exists in other schools.
- Leaders know how to make the school even better. Robust and clear plans have been developed

to ensure that improvement continues. The arrangements that have been made to involve the governing body in the regular evaluation of the school's progress are strong.

- Senior leaders are very aware that further improvement will require more from the school's skilled, and increasingly confident, subject leaders. Subject leaders already have a track record of improving the reliability of assessments. They have improved the consistency of teaching and helped to ensure the accurate targeting of support. They are aware of the weaknesses that still need to be tackled to raise the quality of teaching further. They relish the prospect of being able to take on greater responsibility for making improvements across the school.
- Performance management has been effective in bringing about improvement. Until last year, most staff had not received pay awards because targets had not been met. All staff, including the headteacher, have challenging targets linked to the progress to be made by all groups of pupils.
- Parents acknowledge the improvements that have been made in a relatively short time. The school's leaders have recognised that a key priority for the future is to raise the levels of parental involvement, particularly related to supporting children to achieve their challenging targets.
- Subjects and topics are taught well, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Different subjects are used to promote pupils' literacy and mathematical skills effectively. Plans are well advanced to make more effective use of the whole campus to promote pupils' learning.
- The school is taking highly appropriate steps to ensure that it uses its pupil premium funding more effectively. All staff are held to account for the progress made by eligible pupils. More challenging progress targets are set for these pupils and, as a result, they receive a higher proportion of the interventions. They have benefited particularly from support for reading and number.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are very clear about the role they must play in ensuring that the school sustains recent improvements. They have an accurate view of the weaknesses in teaching and how these have affected pupils' attainment and progress in the past. Key governors have a secure grasp of the assessment information that is used to compare the school's performance to the national averages. New governors are undertaking extensive training to ensure that they have a detailed knowledge of the information related to the school's performance. The governing body has made highly appropriate arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding, and is very well informed about how the money is used. It is holding leaders to account for ensuring that these pupils make better progress. Governors know how teachers' performance is managed to improve their practice. They ensure that only effective teaching is rewarded by pay and promotion. They know and support how senior leaders are tackling any remaining underperformance in teaching.

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	124088
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	410388

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Cutler
Headteacher	Lynn Small
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2012
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