

# Lons Infant School

Tavistock Avenue, Lons Garden Estate, Ripley, DE5 3SE

**Inspection dates** 20–21 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school has improved a great deal since the last inspection.
- Leaders have successfully improved teaching, pupils' achievement and the school's environment.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen and are high by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy school life. Their behaviour is good. They feel safe and are keen to learn.
- The teaching in Reception has improved and is now good.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and would recommend it to others.
- Staff establish excellent working relationships with pupils. They work well as a team to improve the school.
- Regular checking and accurate measurement of the school's work, and examination of information showing how well all groups of pupils are doing, enable leaders to see where improvements are needed.
- There are ambitious and realistic plans for further development.
- Effective leadership by the headteacher and the governing body give the school strong capacity to improve further.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn out-of-doors have increased and are now good for all age groups.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics, although good, is not as rapid as that in reading and writing.
- There are some variations in the quality of teaching that prevent it from being outstanding.
- Some pupils are not sufficiently involved in learning when the class is taught together.
- Reception children's learning journals do not give parents an overview of their progress.
- Observations of lessons do not always focus sharply enough on pupils' learning.
- The best teaching is not used sufficiently as a means of encouraging best practice across the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons. These were all joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector and the headteacher toured the school to collect and discuss evidence of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, two members of the governing body, the school's local authority adviser, and the subject leader for mathematics. Informal discussions were also held with teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and met with a group of six Year 2 pupils.
- Informal discussions took place with parents bringing children to school and the inspector took account of 26 responses on the online survey, Parent View.
- Questionnaires completed by nine staff were considered.
- The inspector read a range of documents including policies, records of checks on staff, and samples of minutes taken at governors' meetings. Records of staff training, accidents and instances of bullying were examined.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined including work on display, mathematics books, target books and photographic records of Reception children's progress (learning journals).

## Inspection team

Susan Aldridge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school. It admits pupils from a wider area than the immediate neighbourhood.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Few are from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, the pupil premium, in this case those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The school provides support for other schools who wish to introduce 'positive play', a means of supporting children who experience difficulties in socialising with others.
- In common with Derbyshire schools, there are six terms in a school year at Lons, rather than three.
- The headteacher started at the school in September 2010, following the retirement of the previous headteacher.
- The school has a number of awards recognising the quality of its work including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Active mark, National Healthy Schools status, Eco-Schools Silver Award and Positive Play.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
  - teachers consistently meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, especially in mathematics, and particularly the more able
  - pupils are kept thinking and involved during those parts of lessons where the whole class is taught together
  - Reception children's learning journals show their starting points and have a clear summary of progress for parents.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - sharing the most effective features of teaching so that these are adopted in all classes
  - focusing sharply on how well pupils are learning when observing lessons in order to identify accurately areas for improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress in Reception. When they join the school many have knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. Since the last inspection, outcomes by the end of Reception have improved each year and are now close to average in most areas of learning.
- The learning experiences provided in Reception are adjusted to suit the needs of each group of children. For instance, extra activities are being provided to increase children's social skills, since many started with low scores in this area of learning. These help children more readily to recognise others' feelings and respond appropriately.
- Improvements in the planning and use of the outdoor area mean that there are good opportunities for children in Reception to develop in all areas of learning when they are outside. This has helped to improve their progress by the end of Reception.
- Pupils' attainment has been high in two out of the last three years by the end of Year 2. In 2011, standards were high in reading and mathematics. In 2012, they were high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards reached by boys have been lower than those reached by girls and the school has worked successfully on reducing this difference. The attainment of boys in Year 2 in writing rose from average in 2011 to high in 2012.
- Progress in reading is very good. Pupils have secure skills in using letters and sounds (phonics) to read unfamiliar words. On average, pupils in Year 2 last year made the same progress in a year as pupils would be expected to make in two years and a term.
- The school recognises that progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in reading and writing. Mathematics is identified as an area for development in the school's improvement plan.
- Each term, to check that all pupils are doing equally well, leaders check carefully the progress made by all groups of pupils. In checks carried out in February, almost all pupils had already made the progress expected of pupils in a year, including those from minority ethnic groups. Where this was not the case the school has stepped in to give pupils extra help.
- Additional help is successful in boosting pupils' attainment. For instance, in a recent mathematics programme lasting three months, pupils made significant increases in their number age. These gains ranged from nine months to over two years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The school quickly acts on concerns. Pupils are well supported in lessons and have additional help individually or in small groups from skilled teaching assistants. Suitable support is also given by external agencies, such as speech-and-language therapists or educational psychologists.
- Pupil premium-funding is used effectively, for additional reading resources, for example. It is helping to reduce the difference in attainment between those known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils. In 2011, the gap was equivalent to a year and two terms in English and mathematics. In 2012 this was reduced to one term.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Parents of children in Reception say that they soon settle at school. Staff draw on parents' knowledge of their children to help assess children's knowledge and skills. This is used well to plan suitable, appealing activities linked to topics both indoors and outside.
- Staff keep good quality records and make regular observations from which they plan the next steps in learning. However, learning journals do not show how well children have improved as they do not show children's starting points or provide a brief summary sheet for parents showing children's progress.
- A significant strength of teaching is the excellent working relationships that staff build with pupils. Parents feel that their children are well cared for in school and pupils know they are valued. In classrooms, expectations of learning behaviour are made clear and regular reminders, praise and encouragement help children to develop good learning habits.
- There is some very good planning where teachers tailor tasks, support, resources and recording methods to suit individual pupils. However, on other occasions and especially in mathematics, all pupils are given the same tasks to do. There is an over-reliance on grouping pupils of similar ability and using support, and not enough thought is given to varying the degree of difficulty of tasks for the more able or providing prompts and resources to help the less able. As a result, a few find aspects of the work easy while others struggle.
- Teaching involves pupils well in their learning. As a result, pupils know what aspects of their work they need to improve. Pupils are well aware of what they are learning about and what they need to do to be successful. They reflect on their work and make honest assessments of how well they have done towards the end of each lesson.
- In general, time in lessons is used well. Occasionally, during whole-class teaching, pupils are not kept thinking and involved throughout sessions and they start to lose interest.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils benefit greatly from the small-group work led by them. They give well-judged support so that pupils do not come to rely on adult help but develop an ability to work on their own.
- Adults encourage pupils' personal development well during lessons. They enable them to discuss in pairs, help one another, work on their own or in small groups, and readily recognise success so that pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils respond well to adults' high expectations of behaviour and they develop good attitudes to learning. They are keen to earn points or be 'in the sunshine' and are not happy when they are 'on the cloud' because of misbehaviour. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions or a signal such as a shaker, and move well from group activities to quiet listening.
- Pupils cooperate well with the adults who help them. They work sensibly on their own and discussion in pairs is invariably about the topic. Work is very well presented, especially in Year 2.
- At lunchtime, in the playground and between classrooms, behaviour is good. While children do not agree all the time, and readily turn to adults for help if they need to, they show an

increasing ability to sort out minor disputes themselves.

- Older pupils readily take on responsibilities as helpers, and there is no shortage of volunteers. They act as buddies for younger pupils, warmly welcoming them to the school.
- Records show that the good and occasionally outstanding behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. Pupils know what bullying is and there are very few instances of this. There have been no instances of racism and no exclusions.
- Pupils who find it difficult to behave well at all times are well supported. The development of the 'positive play' room and training of staff in strategies for supporting pupils has strengthened the school's provision. The school can point to pupils whose behaviour improved as a result of the support they received and went on to achieve well academically.
- Attendance has been high for the past two years, reflecting pupils' great enjoyment of school. Although it has recently dipped, this is explained by recent illness and it is still above average.
- Pupils' knowledge about aspects of keeping safe varies. Their knowledge of fire and road safety is good. The school improvement plan identifies that more needs to be done to develop pupils' awareness of the dangers presented by using electronic means of communication such as the internet.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership. She is ably supported by teaching staff, who all have responsibilities, and members of the governing body, who provide a ready source of assistance as well as challenge. Between them, they have secured improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- A clear, manageable programme for checking the school's work has been developed. This is carried out by the headteacher, governors and subject leaders for English and mathematics. A wide range of activities includes lesson observations, checking of pupils' work, analysis of information on attainment and progress, and interviews with pupils about their learning.
- Leaders successfully identify the strengths in lesson observations. However, these are not shared enough so that all teachers can benefit from them. Occasionally, weaknesses are not identified because observation is focused too much on the performance of adults and not enough on pupils' learning.
- Parental satisfaction is high. Parents are happy with the information provided about their children's progress and all agree that the school is well led and managed. There is excellent information on the school's website for parents of children in Reception.
- The school provides a broad and appealing range of learning experiences. These are well enriched by after-school clubs, visitors and memorable visits. Links with a range of community groups encourage pupils' appreciation of Britain's culturally diverse society. Through their policies and practice, leaders make sure that there is no discrimination of any sort.
- Further opportunities for outdoor learning have been added by developing the school's previously neglected woodland area. The work has involved pupils, parents, staff and governors

as well as the local community.

- The local authority provides good support for the school, especially in Reception, where children's standards have improved each year since the last inspection.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body have a range of skills pertinent to their roles, such as expertise in health and safety, and these are supplemented well by knowledge and skills they have acquired through training, such as in analysing performance information. They put their skills to good use in checking the work of the school and provide good challenge. For example, they have recently queried the dip in attendance.
- Governors are well aware of the quality of teaching across the school as they look at information on pupils' progress, and they check the impact of what the school does to improve teaching in the same way. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance.
- Governors influence the direction the school takes and make important decisions. For example, they have been influential in developing stronger links with the community and made decisions on the deployment of staff. They are regular and frequent visitors to the school.
- The governors make sure that statutory requirements, such as for safeguarding, are met. They check that pupil-premium funding is used as intended, and publish the required information about this on the school's website. However, some policies on the website are out-of-date.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112710
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401295

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tracey Slack
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Godber
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 744319
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