

Longton Lane Community Primary School

Longton Lane, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 8PB

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although attainment in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection, achievement is not yet good. Too few pupils make more than expected progress from their starting points or reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. The needs of groups of differing ability are not always sufficiently taken into account in teachers' planning. As a consequence, there are occasions when pupils find tasks too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils are not always given the resources they need to work independently of the teacher to solve problems and some rely too heavily on direct help from adults.
- Pupils are not always given precise enough guidance about how to improve their work, particularly in writing and spelling.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) does not meet the needs of groups of differing ability precisely enough. As a result, the progress of some pupils is slowed, particularly higher ability pupils.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking and driving improvement in the quality of teaching in their subjects. Good practice in school is not therefore spread rapidly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as the result of consistently good teaching.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They say they feel safe and are confident that the school deals effectively with any instances of poor behaviour.
- The school's own evaluation of its performance is accurate and based on the frequent analysis of pupils' progress.
- Governors are very well informed and are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures. They provide a good level of support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. These included seven joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. Meetings were conducted with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of ten responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents, and questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors read a range of documents. These included information on the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Latham	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Longton Lane is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority and children of service families) is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is higher than average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average but varies from year to year. There is alternative provision for some pupils at a local Pupil Referral Unit (PACE).
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a number of awards including the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark and Healthy school status.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staff.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils joins the school at other than the normal times.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress further in writing and mathematics by:
 - reviewing arrangements for the teaching of phonics to meet the needs of groups of differing ability
 - ensuring pupils are always given precise guidance about how to improve their handwriting and their spelling
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem solving activities and to explain their working to others.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers plan activities that precisely meet the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring pupils are always given the right amount of challenge and support to be able to complete tasks successfully without help from adults
 - increasing the opportunities pupils have to work independently of the teacher to solve problems.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on achievement by fully involving subject leaders, especially in English and mathematics, in checking and driving improvement in the teaching of their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in English and mathematics are better than at the time of the previous inspection but there is still further to go. Pupils make up for lost ground but there is too much reliance upon extra help beyond lessons and too few pupils achieve the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Although the majority of pupils make expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, the progress pupils make as they move through the school is uneven, particularly in writing and could be better.
- Over the last three years there has been a rising trend in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics to above average by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, attainment has been broadly average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading by the end of Year 6. However, recent absence and changes in staff have hampered this improvement.
- Many pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below expectations for their age. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the majority enter Year 1 with skills that are broadly average for their age.
- Across the school, pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. The youngest are able to apply their knowledge of phonics successfully to read simple sentences. By the end of Year 6 most read a variety of texts with fluency and understanding. They are able to talk in detail about what they have read, empathise with characters in stories and make inferences.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved over the last three years, with most pupils now making expected progress, but the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress is lower than that nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making the same expected progress as their peers as the result of the extra help they are given.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is in line with others in this group nationally. Although attainment in English and mathematics is below the national average, the extra support that the school is providing with this funding enables these pupils to reach their targets and to make the same expected progress as their peers.
- Gaps between the performance of different groups, including those receiving this funding and particularly between girls and boys are closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable across the school. Teaching observed during the inspection was judged to require improvement. Although outstanding practice was observed the quality of teaching is not consistently good or better across the school. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage but in Key Stages 1 and 2, it requires improvement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Evidence from the school's own records and from joint observations made by inspectors and school leaders, supports these judgements.
- In some lessons, pupils' progress is slowed because planning does not take sufficient account of their individual needs. When this is the case, pupils lose time either waiting for the teacher to help them because the task is too difficult or waiting for others to catch up because it is too easy.
- In the best lessons, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently or collaboratively. Pupils respond to these opportunities with enthusiasm, especially when tasks involve problem solving. For instance, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson pupils worked enthusiastically in small groups to work out how to construct 3D shapes using 2D shapes or squared paper. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils deepened their understanding about the characters in a story through role play and questioning.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress as a result of the very effective use of

assessment in planning next steps. Teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and are skilful in enabling them to learn through play. They made outstanding progress in putting their mathematical skills to the test, for instance, by running a toyshop and by acting out 'Jack and the Beanstalk' to find out how many beans were left after some were taken away.

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, too often pupils are prevented from thinking for themselves and taking the initiative. This is because they rely too heavily on help from adults or are not given the opportunity to explain their working or their thinking to others.
- The arrangements for teaching phonics and early writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 does not meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities precisely enough because pupils are taught as whole classes which include a wide range of ability. As a result, the progress of higher attaining pupils is slowed and some lower attaining pupils struggle to keep up.
- Pupils' work is usually marked regularly and there are instances of best practice within the school. However, marking does not always give pupils the precise guidance they need to improve their writing. In some classes, marking does not always pick up errors in spelling so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. At times, pupils have difficulty reading comments from the teacher because their skills in reading are not considered enough. Opportunities are also missed to reinforce pupils' targets for writing in subjects other than English.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good one-to-one support in lessons, as well as extra help with English and mathematics, which enables them to participate fully in activities and make adequate progress.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is variable. Where pupils are given the opportunity to work together to solve problems or explore their ideas, they do so sensibly, reflect on and respect one another's views but they are not always given the opportunity to do this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is usually good. They feel safe and they value the good relationships they have with their teachers and with each other. Pupils who have recently joined the school say they have been able to settle in quickly because of the friendly and welcoming atmosphere.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to do well. When given the chance, they work together sensibly and organise themselves well.
- Pupils have a good understanding and awareness of different types of bullying. Both pupils and parents are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and is now average.
- Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and speak enthusiastically about opportunities to take part in sports and other extra-curricular activities.
- They play an active role in decision making through the school council, organising fund raising activities and taking responsibility for their own budget. They take other responsibilities they have, such as digital leaders and playground friends equally seriously.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to secure further improvement. The senior leadership team have an accurate view of the school's performance, through close tracking of pupils' progress against their targets.
- Despite a period of considerable change, the head teacher has been successful in maintaining stability and in improving achievement in English and mathematics since the last inspection. The school therefore has the capacity to improve further.
- Too much reliance, however, is put upon extra help beyond the classroom to fill gaps in pupils' learning and accelerate progress. Plans for improving the quality of teaching is hampered by

disruption caused by recent staffing difficulties. Despite significant changes in staff, the headteacher has been successful in maintaining stability and improving pupils' achievement in mathematics and English.

- The quality of teaching of each member of staff is regularly reviewed. The outcomes are used to secure appropriate training to benefit their professional development and are also used to consider any advancement in pay. The information gathered from lessons, however, is not used effectively enough to drive improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and spread best practice across the school.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking and improving teaching and learning in their subject areas so that improvement in these aspects is too slow.
- There is alternative provision for some pupils at a local Pupil Referral Unit. The school checks their attendance and progress through close liaison with the unit. This process, together with the impact of the nurture group in better meeting pupils' needs, is having a positive impact, not only upon the achievement of these pupils but also upon their attitudes towards learning.
- The school works well in partnership with parents, providing, for instance, opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning through open days in the Early Years Foundation Stage and workshops for parents to help their children in literacy and mathematics.
- While the curriculum adequately provides for pupils to learn all required subjects, not enough time is given to enable pupils to write across all subjects. Also pupils have too little chance to apply their basic skills of mathematics to solve problems. Good provision is made for pupils to develop their skills of ICT. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of activities. Themed days, as well as a range of clubs, such as gardening and computer club and sporting activities, visits and visitors extend learning beyond normal lessons. Pupils also benefit from specialist teaching for physical education, music and modern languages.
- The local authority has provided effective support, particularly for the teaching of mathematics and English, which has had a positive impact upon attainment and progress in these subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of how the school is doing and are clear about what it needs to do to improve further. They are well informed and participate in various forms of training, including safeguarding. They make sure that pupils and staff are safe by securing effective safeguarding arrangements. Governors understand how pupil premium funding is spent. They make sure that some of the grant is used to pay for extra staffing to improve the pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Governors are fully involved in monitoring the performance of the headteacher and setting her relevant targets, they are also aware of the performance of teaching staff. Finances are managed with care and the budget closely controlled. The governing body play an active role in school self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. It provides strong support, and has done throughout a period of considerable change. They regularly challenge the school to improve further.

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	104777
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	404954

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Moria Dickinson
Headteacher	Kathryn Maggs
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2011
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