

Lower Peover CofE Primary School

The Cobbles, Lower Peover, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9PZ

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

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.

- Children enter the school with a range of skills that overall are similar to what could be expected for their age. They make excellent progress during their time in school and achieve standards that are consistently high by the time they leave Year 6. A high proportion attain the higher Level 5, or above, in both English and mathematics.
- The school's excellent performance in the 2012 national tests has been praised in a letter from the Minister of State for Schools.
- Children in the reception class make excellent progress in developing language and social skills, though the development of mathematical skills is not quite as rapid for the more able children.
- Teaching is outstanding and pupils learn at an exceptional rate. Lessons are very enjoyable and engaging so pupils are fully involved in their learning. Lessons are meticulously planned and build on pupils' existing skills.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are excellent. They show great enthusiasm and enjoyment in lessons and this makes a superb contribution to their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. This enhances the harmonious atmosphere and an ethos of mutual respect in school.
- The very rigorous management of teachers' performance by senior leaders, fully supported by the governing body, has been used very effectively to improve teaching and raise standards. Success in reaching challenging targets is reflected in the pay scales of staff.
- Not all middle leaders are fully involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
- Governors are a regular presence in school. They provide well-informed support and challenge for senior leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight teachers in 14 lessons, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the school’s improvement partner.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised the work in their books.
- They looked at the school’s development plan and school’s documentation about pupils’ progress, procedures for safeguarding pupils and the monitoring of staff’s performance.
- Inspectors took account of the 57 responses by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of two letters received from parents. In addition, they scrutinised 20 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Shirley Herring, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Rowland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average primary school, though numbers have increased since the last inspection. All classes contain a single age-group.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background. None of the small number of pupils from a minority ethnic background is at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low as is the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is increasing and is now broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- An independent breakfast and after-school club in school is inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise achievement even further, improve:
 - the teaching of early mathematical skills in Reception to match the excellent practice in developing children's social and early reading skills.
 - the role of the middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children enter the school with skills that are at least typical for their age. They make excellent progress in the reception class and almost all achieve a good level of development for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- A very good improvement in attainment in Key Stage 1 has taken place since 2009, when standards were below average. Standards overall have been above average for the past two years. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been further improvement in the current year and most pupils are exceeding the expected rate of progress.
- Standards have been consistently well above average in Key Stage 2 for several years and achievement has been outstanding. The assessments for the current Year 6 and the exceptional quality of work in their books indicate that high standards exist this year. All pupils are on target to achieve the expected level in English and mathematics with well over half the pupils working at the higher Level 5 and above.
- Standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress. Their needs are identified at a very early stage and they receive well-tailored support, in class, in small groups or individually. The school has excellent links with other professionals to access specialist support for individuals where needed.
- The very small number supported by the pupil premium funding, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, make excellent progress from their individual starting points. They achieve at least as well as others in school and gain higher standards in English and mathematics than similar pupils nationally. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Adults in the reception class plan a wide range of interesting, practical activities, indoors and outside, that show a very good understanding of how young children learn. The sounds that letters make (phonics) are taught systematically and very well; as a result, children make excellent progress in developing early reading skills. Staff are now looking to use this systematic approach to developing early mathematical skills, particularly for those children who learn more quickly.
- Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge and information from assessing pupils' understanding to plan lessons that challenge and support all pupils so they make excellent progress over time.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding, in specific lessons and in other subjects in the curriculum. This ensures that pupils acquire skills that prepare them exceptionally well for the future.
- Probing questioning by adults encourages pupils to think and explain their ideas to help them to develop their understanding.
- Teachers plan excellent opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was seen in an outstanding science lesson when pupils worked practically on dissolving different substances. This led to a very constructive discussion as to how the reverse process might be used to provide clean drinking water in countries where it is not readily available.
- The quality of music teaching is outstanding. The impressive skills of the music teachers and their sense of humour excite and engage the pupils, who achieve an exceptional level of performance. They show great delight in choral singing and have great confidence when given the opportunity to sing solo.

- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and this is consistent across the school. They give very clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve and check that pupils have followed this through.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed and they make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents, staff and pupils themselves agree that behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are very aware of different forms of bullying, but say that the very rare instances are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to behave and had a significant input into the school's behaviour policy. They say any minor infringements are dealt with very effectively.
- Children in the reception class respond well to the consistently high expectations to put up their hands, share with others and say 'please' and 'thank you'. Consequently, their personal and social skills are excellent for their age.
- Pupils say they enjoy working with one another and this enhances their learning in lessons. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 3, where a group of pupils worked in pairs to find two number cards to add to a thousand, discussing and refining their choices as they moved closer to the total.
- Pupils concentrate well, take pride in what they do and the presentation of work in their books is a delight to see.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. They accept responsibilities readily, for example on the school council, as sports leaders and as Eco Warriors.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Discussions with staff and the high return of the confidential staff questionnaires indicate a strong sense of staff sharing a common aim and working as a team for the benefit of the pupils.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders has led to considerable improvements. Excellent performance is rewarded and support and training are provided where needed. Consequently, attainment and progress have improved and are now outstanding.
- The role of the middle leaders is evolving, though some are not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in lessons within their area of responsibility.
- Though standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently high over time, senior leaders are not complacent and continually seek ways to improve. This is evident in the increasing number of pupils who are working at levels beyond, and sometimes well beyond, what is expected for their age.
- The curriculum is very broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing basic skills but it also caters exceptionally well for pupils' creative development. The school's decision to employ specialist music teachers provides excellent opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is firmly based on the school's Anglican tradition, but also encompasses a good understanding of other world faiths and cultures.
- Parents say they are well informed and feel welcome in school. One parent expressed her pride in the school, writing: 'The head brings humour, life, art, music and Christian values alongside considerable academic rigour.' What a testimonial!
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including the increasing number of pupils with a statement, is expertly and sensitively managed; as a result, pupils make excellent progress. One parent wrote that the school had 'embraced his [their son's] potential and helped him to focus'.

- Improvements in teaching and achievement indicate that the school has the capacity to improve even further.
- The local authority provides appropriate, light-touch support for this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils and staff and all the required systems are in place. They have an excellent understanding of how well pupils are achieving in comparison with pupils from similar schools. Governors are well informed about teachers' performance and the link between this and salary progression. They ensure that staff are suitably rewarded, including the headteacher. Governors know how the funding received through the pupil premium is used and are monitoring its effectiveness. Governors give generously of their time and skills. The expertise within the governing body has contributed to the creation of an impressive website which provides excellent communication with parents. The governing body has a clear, ambitious vision for the school and works closely with the senior leaders and staff to achieve their shared aims.

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	111337
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	403149

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Lawton
Headteacher	Sharon Dean
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2008
Telephone number	01625 383292
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	head@lowerpeover.cheshire.sch.uk

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