

High Legh Primary School

Wrenshot Lane, High Legh, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6NW

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Achievement is good and improving. Pupils make good progress across school and, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards which are above average.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teaching has improved and is now consistently good.
- Teachers have very strong relationships with pupils which has a very positive effect on pupils' eagerness to work hard.
- Behaviour is outstanding because pupils' attitudes are exemplary and their manners and conduct around school are consistently strong. Pupils describe feeling happy and safe at school. Parents overwhelmingly agree.
- Robust systems are in place to check on the quality of teaching. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and leaders use this information to identify pupils who may need additional support.
- The school has a clear focus on raising achievement. The determination of the interim headteacher, well supported by leaders at all levels, is ensuring that pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and knows what to do to improve the performance of the school. Governors have managed staff changes effectively, ensuring performance continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently tell pupils what steps they need to take to improve their work or give them enough time to check and respond to these.
- The school is still in the process of embedding the range of opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the interim headteacher. The inspector and interim headteacher also looked at work in pupils' books.
- The inspector listened to pupils from four different year groups read, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 47 responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View, school questionnaires completed by staff and outcomes from the school's consultations with parents.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- High Legh is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs 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 above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, and particularly in the current academic year, there has been disruption to staffing, including leadership. The interim headteacher took up post in October 2012 to cover the planned absence of the headteacher.
- Over the period of the inspection, Years 5 and 6 were away from school on a residential trip with teaching staff.
- There is a private pre-school on site and a privately managed after-school provision both of which will be subject to separate inspections. The reports of these inspections can be found on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' achievement by increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that activities that teachers plan are precisely and consistently matched to the needs of all pupils
 - making sure teachers consistently give pupils clear guidance on what steps they need to take to improve their work and that they have time to respond to these
 - embedding recent initiatives to provide pupils with more opportunities to work independently in all subjects
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use and apply mathematical skills in 'real-life' contexts and other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills that are in line with what is expected for their age. They make good progress from their individual starting points and are well prepared to enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average.
- In the past, pupils' progress has fluctuated, especially in Key Stage 2. However, the school's recent focus on raising achievement further, particularly in writing, has resulted in many pupils making good and some outstanding progress in writing, reading and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children show enjoyment in their activities and are keen to learn. They grow in confidence as they learn to make choices for themselves. Children take turns and share resources fairly, as evident when using the role-play area set up as a garden centre.
- Although last year's results for Year 6 pupils in writing were not as good as in reading or mathematics, recent assessments show that achievement in writing across the school has improved, including at Year 6. This is because of a focus on successful teaching strategies and providing opportunities to write for different purposes and in different subjects. Attainment is now above the national average at the end of both key stages.
- Reading is a strength of the school and pupils read regularly and with enjoyment. They talk confidently about favourite authors and their preference for different types of books.
- Attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is above the national average. The teaching of letters and sounds is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage made rapid progress in one lesson. They showed confidence and accuracy in using their knowledge of letters and sounds to build words correctly, and independently wrote a sentence containing these.
- Pupils develop their mathematical skills well and sometimes use these to solve problems in mathematics lessons. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills in 'real-life' contexts or in subjects other than mathematics and this prevents them from making more rapid progress.
- The individual needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified early and monitored closely. The well-targeted extra support provided to meet their needs ensures they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, while few in number, receive extra help from teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to make good progress. Current school information shows that attainment in English and mathematics for these pupils is the same as for other groups in school. The school ensures that any gaps in performance are quickly identified and acted on, showing the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Although there has been some variability in teaching across Key Stage 2 over time, teaching has improved as shown in the work seen in pupils' books and teaching seen during the inspection, which was consistently good or better. This has resulted in marked improvements in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teacher's excellent understanding of the needs of children this age ensures that children make good progress. In one session, children quickly learnt how to double a number because the teaching, using dinosaurs to help, captivated them. They worked together to double bigger numbers with rapid success.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use assessment information to plan activities to keep pupils interested and which usually match pupils' needs. Occasionally, the work set is too hard or not sufficiently demanding which does not promote rapid and sustained progress.

- Where teaching is outstanding, the challenge is precisely matched to pupils' differing needs and abilities. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm and rise eagerly to the challenge.
- In a Key Stage 1 'letters and sounds' lesson, one group of pupils was fully engaged in playing a game to identify, read and write different words, checking each other's accuracy. Other pupils were learning how to accurately add '-ing' to words. The teacher recognised when pupils were not learning as well as they might and made changes so that their progress was rapid rather than good.
- Teachers have more recently increased opportunities for pupils to work independently. There were good examples where pupils worked independently in pairs and small groups, obviously enjoying working things out for themselves, such as making and testing boats they had made from small construction bricks. The school recognises the need to further develop these opportunities across all subjects.
- Teaching assistants play active roles in helping pupils' learning, both within lessons and when working with small groups. This ensures that disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make equally good progress.
- Teachers mark work regularly and often write comments that encourage pupils. However, guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work does not always provide clear advice about what steps they need to take to improve the standards of their work. Although there were some very good examples of pupils having opportunity to respond to such guidance, this is not consistent across school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- There is a very positive atmosphere around school which is exemplified in pupils' outstanding behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils show high levels of respect for one another and have excellent manners.
- Relationships with adults are extremely positive and pupils say that they 'completely trust the teachers because they look after you'. They are eager to learn and work hard. They work together well and share their ideas and are becoming increasingly independent in making choices. This reflects their high levels of social and moral development.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different types of bullying and say that bullying is rare. They are fully confident that it is always taken seriously and dealt with immediately. Pupils say that behaviour is of a high standard and describe it as 'outstanding' and 'amazing'. Any incidents of bad behaviour are fully investigated and the overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school makes sure pupils are very well behaved.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and can identify unsafe situations, including the use of the internet. This is because safety issues are addressed through their lessons and visitors who come to the school to talk about, for example, staying safe on roads and fire safety. Pupils designed and delivered their own assembly about 'stranger danger'.
- Pupils contribute very well to school life through their various responsibilities such as school council representatives, prefects and buddies for the youngest children.
- Attendance is consistently above average. Pupils express very clearly the importance of regular attendance and are keen to achieve the rewards which are given for high levels of attendance. The school sets high expectations for attendance and any absence is rigorously followed up.

The leadership and management are good

- The interim headteacher has an accurate view of the school and has, in a short period of time, set clear and robust targets for improvement which have been fully shared with staff. This has resulted in improvements in teaching and achievement across the school, reflecting positive staff morale during a period of staff change.
- Planning for improvement has been refined so that targets, including those to measure staff

performance, are challenging and measurable in terms of how successful they are proving. There is a clear and robust link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression.

- The headteacher has been supported well by other senior leaders who demonstrate effective leadership in their areas. They have ensured that pupils' progress is frequently and rigorously checked and that any pupils who may need additional support are quickly identified and monitored. They are supporting those new to their subject leader roles, through training and jointly checking on performance and the quality of teaching to support continuing improvement.
- Staff have shared good practice both within school and by visiting other schools. This has resulted in improvement in the quality of teaching and achievement, particularly in writing.
- The curriculum is good and provides pupils with a good range of enrichment activities, including clubs, visitors and trips which enhance pupils' learning. Pupils from different years also have the opportunity to attend a range of residential visits.
- There is a high focus on values, reflected in the comments made by pupils about friendship and honesty. This, and opportunities to share letters with pupils in another, culturally diverse, school supports their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Partnerships with parents are good and the vast majority of parents are highly positive about the school. The school shares information with, and involves parents in, making decisions about improving the school through the parent forum. The Parent Teacher Association actively supports school through events such as 'playground sparkle' and raising money.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the performance of the school, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. This is based on their knowledge of the data and the ways in which they check it, including scrutinising books and talking to pupils and staff. They make decisions to secure the best opportunities and resources for pupils in the school, having managed the number of staff changes well to secure continued improvement. The governors, particularly the Chair of the Governing Body, meet regularly with the interim headteacher, offering support and challenge. Governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet all the statutory requirements. Governors keep a close check on the school's budget, making sure that, for example, pupil premium money is used to good effect. Governors have a good understanding of how performance management is carried out and how leadership ensures that good teaching is linked to pay awards. They help to make sure that teaching that is less successful is addressed. Governors ensure that they are well trained and identify appropriate courses to meet specific responsibilities.

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	111096
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	413074

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	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Johnson
Headteacher	Lynette Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2009
Telephone number	01925 753713
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