

Locking Stumps Community Primary School

Glover Road, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 7PH

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- From their typically expected starting points, pupils achieve well to reach standards that are above average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Good teaching helps the majority of pupils of all abilities and groups to make at least good, and in some cases, outstanding progress.
- Typically, behaviour is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.
- The new headteacher, Key Stage Leaders and the governing body have led the school very well through a period of transition and it is starting to recover its former exceptional levels of performance. The staff are highly supportive of this and all are contributing strongly to improving teaching and pupils' levels of achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time there have been inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in some areas of the school and progress is not yet consistently outstanding.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching and a small minority requires improvement. This is particularly within the areas of lesson pace, challenge and the use of modern technologies to communicate learning.
- Senior leaders do not yet monitor the ongoing progress of groups of pupils easily enough or with sufficient frequency to identify variances and ensure that timely action is taken to support their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all mainstream classes as well as in some small groups receiving specific support for literacy and mathematics. This totalled 25 observations, of which two were conducted with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and to parents as they collected their children from school in the afternoon. They took account of 22 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, as well as emails sent by parents and 22 completed inspection questionnaires from staff.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff and a telephone interview was carried out with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation, including the school's records of pupils' performance, evaluations of the quality of teaching over time and its short- and long-term plans for improvement. Safeguarding procedures were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and checked the school's information about pupils' progress in reading.

Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Latham	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with more boys than girls.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with very small groups of other mixed heritages, of whom a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is 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 proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- The school operates mixed-age classes in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is an independently managed pre-and-after-school club and an independently managed nursery on the school site. These provisions are inspected separately and their inspection reports can be found on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- There have been a significant number of staffing changes over the last two years. This has included a change of headteacher in January 2013, resulting in a reduced senior leadership team until the autumn term, and major redefining of staff roles and responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the very good practices evident within outstanding lessons across all classes, so that pupils' attainment is raised and achievement further improved, by:
 - ensuring that teaching is always conducted at a brisk pace
 - teachers more frequently check pupils' learning within lessons, especially of the more-able pupils, and adapt their teaching so that pupils are constantly challenged to extend their learning
 - pupils and teachers make greater use of modern technologies in the classroom as tools for learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing further systems for checking pupils' progress so that senior leaders can more easily and frequently analyse the ongoing progress of different groups of pupils and take appropriate and timely action where needed to support their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The skills of most of the children who start the Early Years Foundation Stage vary year-on-year but are overall broadly typical for their age. In a minority of cases, they are below this in reading and writing. Children make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress through Reception due to the good teaching and excellent routines established by the teachers and adult helpers. As a result, behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent.
- This good progress continues throughout both Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is average over time but has recently risen rapidly to above average because of changes in staffing and roles made earlier this year.
- The teaching of reading has long been a strength of the school. Last year saw a dip, however, in the Year 1 national assessment of pupils' use of phonics (letters and sounds) to help in their reading. This was quickly identified and has been rapidly overcome so that pupils now exceed national expectations in this area of their learning. For some pupils, given their starting points, this constitutes outstanding progress.
- Attainment over time at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. Again, it dipped slightly last year but inspection evidence and school data indicate that this has improved rapidly, with current Year 6 pupils exceeding national expectations overall. The proportion of pupils working at the higher levels matches national expectations.
- Good, and in some cases accelerated rates of progress over time can be seen in reading, writing and mathematics in many cases. Pockets of no better than expected progress are still evident within some of the Year 3/4 classes, notably in mathematics, but the school has this well in hand and is supporting learning here strongly through high-quality, small-group teaching to make up lost ground.
- The school makes very good use of its pupil premium funding. Last year, pupils known to be eligible for this funding attained below the level of others not eligible but showed greater rates of progress from their starting points. This year, inspection evidence and school data show pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to be working in Year 6 at above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics, similar to other groups who are not eligible, having made good progress overall and accelerated progress in mathematics.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been revised. This has consolidated the progress of these pupils and overcome the dip last year in the group supported at school action. Across the school, the vast majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress with some again making accelerated progress in mathematics.
- Pupils in local authority care and those whose first language is not English also make progress in line with others in the school because of the highly structured support they receive, especially from highly skilled teaching assistants. The extensive range of intervention classes and support activities provided for all groups of pupils shows the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity, the fostering of good relations and tackling of discrimination.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good, and some is outstanding. Teaching is improving strongly as a result of more stable staffing and some new appointments, and through concerted action led by the recently appointed headteacher and the governing body. Consequently, weaker teaching evident in some areas last year has been largely eradicated, although a very small minority still requires improvement.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The school has created a vibrant learning environment for children here, including extensive facilities outside that enable children to enjoy their learning enormously. Children move between the learning areas easily and confidently,

which helps develop their independent learning considerably.

- English and mathematics are taught well, with both phonics and mathematics the focus this year which has paid off significantly in higher rates of progress being made by pupils in these areas across the school.
- The best element of teaching within Key Stages 1 and 2, especially within outstanding lessons, is the effectiveness with which teachers plan for and meet the wide range of pupils' learning needs within the mixed-age classes. This is made possible by the regular checks on learning and adaptation of activities and teachers' delivery of the lesson, to ensure that pupils are constantly challenged to extend their learning.
- The pace of the best lessons is lively and pupils' engagement and interest are maintained by the good use of questioning by the teacher and the use of real world situations to make the learning relevant. In one case of outstanding teaching, a recent burglary was used to great effect in Year 5 to prompt high quality newspaper-style writing and draw out pupils' understanding of citizenship and right and wrong.
- Marking and feedback to pupils on their learning are good, including in their topic work, with clear indications of how to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- There is still a small amount of teaching that requires improvement within the school. It is characterised by a slower pace of teaching that does not fully maintain pupils' interests, and a lack of the regular monitoring of learning within a lesson that leads to constant challenge in the best lessons. As a result, in these weaker lessons, more-able pupils in particular are not fully stretched to extend their learning.
- The school is in the process of developing its use of modern technologies to support learning. There is a good website and electronic learning facility available to parents and pupils that can be accessed from home. However, both teachers and pupils do not yet make full use of facilities such as interactive whiteboards or other technologies within classrooms. This limits pupils' abilities to communicate their learning as effectively or richly as possible.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Virtually all pupils feel extremely happy, safe and well cared for in the school, owing to the high priority staff and governors place on pupils' welfare. An overwhelming proportion of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, and through recent school surveys and in emails from parents, agree that pupils are very well cared for.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning in lessons and are keen to understand and complete their work. They show great determination to succeed and their enjoyment of school is shown through their consistently above-average attendance.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils listen very well to teachers and play safely together. Pupils are polite, kind and courteous.
- The school council is very active in helping to shape the daily life of the school and pupils regularly contribute feedback on the range of topics taught and their experiences of teaching so that the school can improve its provision further.
- Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and pupils are very confident that, if encountered, it will be dealt with effectively. Pupils' understanding of different forms of bullying is very good, most notably over the need for e-safety.
- Staff are highly skilled in managing pupils' welfare, helped by their good quality training and extensive use of external agencies. Strong links with the independently managed pre-and-after-school clubs and nursery ensure that pupils' needs when they enter the school, or in their extended learning environments, are very well known and incorporated into the school's thinking about each child in their care.
- Inspectors witnessed the school's outstanding personal, social and health education provision, where groups of pupils from Reception to Year 6 are combined in a fortnightly session to discuss topics and help each other to understand how they can become better individuals and citizens. The quality of interaction between pupils of different ages was exceptional and demonstrated

how the curriculum and teaching make an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has high expectations of everyone and has led the school through its period of change with skill and determination. She is very well supported by the governing body, senior leaders and staff. Morale is high and all are dedicated to the success of the school and provision for its pupils.
- An interim development plan is in place, and it clearly focuses upon key aspects of the school's performance and is well supported by extensive and well-applied subject and phase leader plans which together provide a good structure for moving the school forward. Significant improvements have already been seen, for instance, in the teaching and outcomes in mathematics and phonics.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching carefully and manage staff performance well, including the training of new teachers and other adults. Staffing has been renewed and stabilised, as well as roles redistributed to good effect. Through good partnership working the role of the special needs coordinator has been enhanced, as has provision for supporting pupils' personal development and well-being, with very positive effect.
- The school is currently revising its practices for recording information about pupils' achievement. Teachers and phase leaders use this information well to pinpoint what and where additional support is needed. However, due to the transition between systems, senior leaders do not yet analyse the ongoing progress of groups of pupils with sufficient regularity in order to rapidly identify where pupils' achievement could improve and prioritise action to deal with this.
- The curriculum is a real strength of the school, providing exciting opportunities for learning, often enriched by visits and visitors to the school. Excellent displays of pupils' work around the school celebrate their learning.
- Inspectors were presented with high quality topic work on a variety of themes that clearly demonstrated links between subjects and extended pupils' understanding of the wider world. This is helped by a strong link with a school in South Africa and another of a very different kind in this country. As such, the curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to very good effect to raise the ambition and self-esteem of this group. It has contributed to their accelerated learning through additional support for literacy and through first-hand experiences that would not otherwise have been possible.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has played a vital role in school improvement, helped by light-touch support from the local authority. Governors are highly skilled and knowledgeable about the school and have supported it very well throughout its period of change. Within this they have vigorously challenged the school over its performance and the quality of teaching and held it to account for improvements and pupils' progress. They have led the appointment of both a new headteacher and, most recently, a deputy headteacher, who takes up post in September. They ensure that performance management takes place and is meaningfully linked to salary progression. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.

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	111204
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	412427

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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Agnew
Headteacher	Jane Evans
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2009
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