

# Leek First School

East Street, Leek, ST13 6LF

**Inspection dates** 18–19 March 2014

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

- Standards have dipped since the previous inspection because pupils in Years 1 to 4 have not made good progress.
- The pupil premium funds are not used effectively enough to help pupils eligible for such support to catch up with their peers.
- Teaching requires improvement because it varies between classes and subjects. Not all teachers provide enough guidance to pupils to help them learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils' progress is sometimes held back when they have to spend too long repeating work they have already learnt.
- Not all pupils attend school regularly enough, especially those for whom the school receives additional funding. Consequently, attendance is below average.
- Leaders, including governors, have not identified all the right priorities that would improve pupils' achievement. The development plans lack sufficient detail.
- Governors do not question senior leaders deeply enough about teaching, the way that the pupil premium funds are used and the progress made by pupils.
- Although pupils are safe in school, there are gaps in procedures and governors have not checked that best practice is implemented.
- Not all leaders and managers contribute fully to improving the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in Reception, where they are taught well.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave well around school and have good attitudes to learning.
- Standards are rising again after a two year dip as actions by senior leaders improve teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, including three that were seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection. There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to allow an analysis to be completed.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs has risen significantly and is well above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or have a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The school appointed a new deputy headteacher and senior teacher in April 2013.
- A Nursery opened on the school site in 2012. This is managed by other providers and did not form part of the inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, and accelerate pupils' progress to at least good in all classes and subjects, by ensuring that teachers:
  - improve teachers' guidance and its use in helping pupils learn and make progress
  - improve planning to enable pupils to move onto new work as soon as they are ready.
- Improve the progress of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium so that they reach similar standards to those of other pupils by:
  - targeting the funds available more effectively at those who are making the least progress
  - checking more closely that the support provided is having the desired effect and changing the type of support when it is not working.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - raising attendance to at least consistently average
  - using the detailed information available about the effectiveness of school's work more effectively to set a comprehensive set of priorities for improvement that are supported by more precise actions and measurable criteria for success
  - developing the role of staff with management responsibilities to improve how well teaching is checked
  - improving the expertise and effectiveness of governors in holding the headteacher to account, with particular reference to being able to analyse data for themselves, checking that safeguarding procedures are robust and that the pupil premium funds are used effectively.

An external review of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards are not as high as they were at the previous inspection. The most able pupils made slower progress than others in the recent past, and the proportions reaching standards above those expected for their age have been below average.
- Pupils start Year 1 with standards that are broadly average. When they leave, in Year 4, standards remain in line with their age, because the majority do not make good progress.
- Pupils' progress is inconsistent. Pupils currently in Year 4, for example, fell behind in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, but made good progress in Years 3 and 4 to make up the ground lost. The opposite was true in reading. A similar picture of inconsistency is discerned in other classes and subjects.
- The pupil premium funding is not being used effectively to accelerate the progress of pupils eligible for support. The school's leaders have used most of the funds to employ extra teaching assistants to work with whole classes or to provide more after-school clubs for all pupils, rather than specifically targeting the funds at eligible pupils. Gaps in attainment have not narrowed consistently; they are closing in some years but widening in others. Attainment in 2013 for Year 2 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals remained behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Boys' standards are lower than girls'. This is because many more boys are eligible for support through the pupil premium. They make similar progress to girls, but start Year 1 and end Year 4 with lower standards.
- Pupils come to lessons eager to learn. They quickly settle and work hard on the tasks they are given. However, their learning slows when they run out of work to do and simply sit waiting for the next task.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. The school makes good use of a wide range of agencies to support those who need extra specialist help. The support that such pupils receive in lessons is more variable. Sometimes they are given work that is too easy for them, while on other occasions they enjoy getting to grips with a really difficult problem.
- The school's work with more-able pupils has improved and is now good and is leading to accelerated progress for this group.
- Children join Reception with skills and knowledge that are lower than those expected for their age. They make consistently good progress. Good teaching ensures that they quickly settle into routines and build upon what they already know, understand and can do. Children play and work together well and are quick to do as they are told.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Inconsistencies are noticeable in key areas of teaching. Some marking is exemplary, for example. It points out exactly what a pupil needs to do to improve and where they have been successful. In another class though, errors such as '2 divided by 10 equals 5' are marked as correct and pupils do not realise the mistakes they are making and continue to lay out such

sums the wrong way around.

- Some teachers ignore the pupils' failure to comply with their written guidance and instructions. This leads to pupils making repeated errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Planning is sometimes weak so that some pupils have to spend unnecessary time repeating known work when they should be learning something new. The practice of having to complete pages of calculations in their mathematics books, when they have already clearly shown that they know how to do the work, for example, slows progress.
- Even within lessons there can be significant differences in the progress of groups of pupils. Those working with the teacher often make rapid progress, in learning their letters and sounds. But when groups get on by themselves the teacher does not always check that the task is hard enough or that the pupils have not run out of things to do.
- Teaching assistants, paid for by the use of pupil premium funds, rarely target eligible pupils specifically.
- Sometimes, teachers think up exciting and novel ways to use topics that enthuse and engage pupils. Those studying 'The Romans', for example, have a fascinating collection of artefacts to use. They also do sums using roman numerals and read stories about life in Roman households that help bring the topic alive.
- Discipline is always good and rarely does a pupil need more than a quick reminder to refocus when their attention strays from the task in hand. Pupils are keen to please their teachers and so try their best. Their work is neat and tidy and contains interesting ideas.
- Staff in Reception are adept at planning activities that build on what children already know, understand and can do. They carefully guide children to activities that help them to practice skills that they have learnt in a more focussed lesson led by the teacher. For example, after learning new letters, children had lots of opportunities to draw them in shaving foam or sand, find them in the water tank or write them in a birthday card.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. While pupils are safe at the school, there are weaknesses in procedures. There are minor clerical errors in the records of the checks made to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children, the first fire drill of the academic year is not held until October and none has been carried out this term. There are gaps in some policies that provide guidance to staff on what to do to ensure pupils' safety in specific circumstances.
- Attendance is below average. Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are more likely to be absent than other pupils and the school's leaders are not using the funds available to tackle the problem. Punctuality to school is good.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They report that there is very little bullying and it is quickly stamped out by staff if it does occur. Parents are also happy with the measures taken to deal with any such issues. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when dealing with strangers and crossing the road.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons they are keen to learn, although sometimes they

would rather carry on with their work than put their pens down to listen to the teacher. Girls in particular are quick to put their hands up and answer questions. Boys enjoy solving problems in mathematics, because they 'can get a right answer'.

- Pupils discuss topics sensibly and share resources when they need to without any fuss. They are good at apportioning roles when working as a team.
- Outside of lessons, pupils are polite and welcoming, with good manners. They get on well with one another and incidents of pupils falling out are relatively rare.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Until April 2013 the headteacher carried out almost all the leadership and management roles within school. Insufficient time was given to ensuring that teaching improved and that pupils made good progress with the result that standards fell. .
- The appointment of a new senior leadership team in April 2013 has begun to reverse the decline. The leadership and management load is now being shared and teaching and standards are improving again. The headteacher still carries out all the checks on teaching. His evaluations of strengths and weaknesses in teaching are accurate and are improving its quality. Nevertheless, checks are relatively few and the role of other senior leaders and those responsible for subjects is underdeveloped in this respect.
- The appointment of the assistant headteacher has meant that information from a range of sources is now better analysed. However, the analysis does not go far enough to identify all of the most important areas for improvement, so some important aspects, such as attendance, are not identified as a development priority. Attempts to improve attendance are not working fast enough. Leaders wait too long before acting on indications that an individual pupil's attendance is falling, rather than contacting parents as soon as concerns arise.
- Some priorities on the development plan are well thought out and leading to significant improvements. For example the focus on improving the teaching of the most able. Others though are not backed up by sufficiently detailed plans or criteria by which their success can be measured. As a result, the impact is patchy across the school and leads to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class is good. The manager is quick to take action on any areas of weakness and the good progress that children make has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught the right way to behave in a range of circumstances and the importance of working hard in lessons is consistently reinforced both by teachers and in assemblies. Links with schools in America and Kenya, together with the study of other religions and topics such as Chinese writing ensure pupils gain a good insight into how others live.
- The school provides a strong message of tolerance and respect as part of its good promotion of equality and tackling of discrimination.
- The school has made good use of the extra funding for school sports, with the aim of reducing levels of obesity. Much has been invested in an outdoor gym which is proving very popular. Year 4 pupils have taken responsibility for setting up a timetable for its use, so that all pupils benefit

from weekly sessions during break and lunch times. It is too soon to judge the impact on weight loss and fitness, but it is clear that far more pupils than previously are now exercising daily.

- The local authority representative visits the school frequently. The local authority's evaluation of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching is accurate. Support is being provided that is helping the school to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors rely too heavily on information from senior leaders, rather than analysing data for themselves. As a result, they are not able to ask the questions that get to the heart of the school's performance, provide them with enough information on the quality of teaching, and hold the headteacher sufficiently to account.
- Although finances are well under control, governors do not check that the pupil premium funding is being used effectively to accelerate the progress of pupils eligible for support. Governors meet the letter of the law with respect to safeguarding, but are not checking that all procedures are as good as they could be.
- Governors give freely of their time and are very supportive of the school and the work of leaders. They were fundamental in improving the quality of leadership through appointing a deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Governors are very clear about how teachers' performance is managed and use the procedures well to manage the performance of the headteacher. They are less knowledgeable about how weaker teaching is tackled as they are not sure where it exists.

## 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>	124098
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431518

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Fisher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Allbutt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	June 24 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 483200
<b>Fax number</b>	01538 483203
<b>Email address</b>	office@leek-first.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

