

Frodsham Manor House Primary School

Langdale Way, Frodsham, Cheshire, WA6 7LE

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Over time, pupils make good progress from their broadly average starting points and usually reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- In some year groups, the most able pupils do particularly well; the quality of their work, and the standards they reach, are high. Girls' writing is a particular strength.
- Most teaching is good. When pupils are challenged to think hard and do their very best, they invariably respond well and succeed.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and listen carefully. Around the school, they are courteous, polite, respectful and friendly to others.
- Pupils enjoy school and the many extra activities and visits that take place. There are many events that serve to broaden their experiences and develop their talents. Their level of attendance is higher than that seen in most other schools.
- Parents, staff and pupils express very positive views about the school.
- Pupils' well-being is given a high priority. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and say that instances of bullying or poor behaviour are rare.
- Since the previous inspection, school leaders and governors have maintained the school's good performance. In recent times, governors have strengthened their procedures for monitoring the school's work and this has improved the effectiveness of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of boys, particularly in writing, does not match the high standards reached by girls.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in science are not rigorous enough.
- Some of the teachers' checks on what pupils understand and can do are not sufficiently precise. Consequently, the quality of advice that pupils receive about their learning, and the match of work to their abilities, varies between classes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher, and also made several short visits to classrooms. All the teachers were seen teaching and inspectors examined the work in pupils' books and on display. In addition, the inspectors observed an assembly and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed the school's procedures and pupils' behaviour at the start and end of the school day, and at lunch times and break times.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders and governors. A telephone conversation with a local authority representative also took place.
- The inspectors took account of 63 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and received four letters from parents. They also talked to some parents who visited the school, and considered 23 responses to the school staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans, and records of governors' meetings. Records relating to the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ben Cox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Frodsham Manor House Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that seen in most other schools. The proportion supported at school action is smaller than average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There is a privately run pre-school provision on site which is subject to a separate inspection at a different time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or outstanding across the school in order to raise standards even higher, particularly in boys' writing, by making sure:
 - teachers' checks on what pupils know and can do enable them to plan work that provides just the right level of challenge
 - pupils do not have too many undemanding tasks or routines to complete before they get on to any new learning or adequately challenging work
 - pupils in all year groups are given clear information about what they need to do to refine and improve their work so that they fully understand the next steps in learning that they need to take.
- Make sure that leaders checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the school, particularly in science, are always focused on driving forward improvements in teaching and learning, by making sure that:
 - existing plans to develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills, as described in the school improvement plan, are put into action and the impact checked regularly and carefully
 - the school timetable provides sufficient opportunity, in every year group, for all pupils' learning needs in science to be met.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. The good progress that they make during their first year at school means that the vast majority are very well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- This good start is built upon successfully in Key Stage 1. In the main, pupils display very positive learning habits and are keen to do their best. Because of this, they respond well to teaching and, over time, reach at least average standards at the end of Year 2. In the current Year 2, standards are above average and, in a few cases, well above average. The quality of some of the girls' written work, for example, is superb.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress overall and usually reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. In 2013, however, writing dipped from the above average standard seen in previous years because some pupils, mainly boys, did not do as well as they should have done given their starting points. A number of factors contributed to this; one reason being that progress in Years 3 and 4 used to be slower than it is now and some pupils did not manage to catch up. School leaders and teachers have been quick to push standards back up this year and pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are doing well.
- Nevertheless, while boys in current year groups are making good progress in writing, the standard they reach falls short of the high standard reached by many of the girls. In reading and mathematics, the achievement of girls and boys is more even.
- Achievement in reading is strong in all year groups and this has been the case year-on-year since the previous inspection. Pupils read daily and receive extra support if they need it. In 2013, the Year 1 phonic (letters and the sounds they make) screening check scores were above the national figure.
- The most able pupils achieve in line with their capabilities and, during this inspection, some particularly able pupils were seen tackling some very challenging work with perseverance and success. In addition, completed work in books is often of a high standard.
- Across the school, there is no significant difference between the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils. In 2013, both groups of pupils reached similar standards in mathematics and writing, although pupils not eligible for free school meals were about two terms ahead in their reading. An analysis of current progress and attainment data does not identify any particular pattern or concern.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities make good progress. Staff are quick to identify their particular needs when they start school, and make sure they get the help, support and encouragement they need in order to make the progress that they should. Individual pupils who spoke with inspectors, listed the benefits of the help they had been given and these were apparent in their work and their positive attitudes to school and learning.
- While some boys could do better with their writing, all are provided with equal opportunity to succeed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils do well because most teaching is good.
- Well-organised teaching in the Reception class gets the children into good learning habits which serve them well as they move through the school. As soon as they first start in school, they are expected to do their best and to take on responsibility through classroom tasks and jobs such as 'the learning inspector' or the 'tidy inspector'. They rise to these challenges and expectations with pride and efficient enthusiasm.
- Pupils in all classes report that they enjoy their lessons and say that the teachers plan many interesting activities that make them think hard and help them to learn and make progress. Work in pupils' books and around the school, together with observations of teachers, teaching

assistants and pupils at work, confirms that this is the case.

- There is no doubt that the school has focused heavily on teaching writing skills this year. Around the building, many examples of good quality writing shine out from displays and it is clear that pupils' efforts are recognised and that they feel buoyed up and inspired by the encouragement they receive.
- Pupils are pushed to work hard and stretch their thinking. During this inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils' ability to collect and analyse information, and perform complex calculations, was stretched to the full as they used hand-held tablet technology to gather the data required to investigate the maximum daily passenger capacity of the 'London Eye'. Sometimes, however, some pupils mark time unnecessarily because they have undemanding tasks to complete before they get onto work that pushes their learning on further.
- Most of the time, the level of challenge in the work given to pupils is just right and teaching staff check that everyone understands before moving learning on. On a few occasions, the work for some pupils gets too hard, too quickly, and teaching is not adjusted in response to the questions they ask or the mistakes that they make.
- Work is marked regularly. Pupils are given 'targets' or 'next steps' in their learning and they report that they know how well they are doing. In some classes, however, they are not always sure of what it is they need to do next in order to reach their 'next step' and this stops them making even faster progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, they listen carefully and work hard; around the school, they conduct themselves in a calm and orderly fashion. When outside, they get on well together and conflict is rare.
- Pupils look smart, are polite to others, and take pride in their work.
- A key factor that greatly assists pupils' good achievement is their conscientious attitude to learning. This helps them to make the most of the teaching they receive.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and procedures for following up any lateness or absence are well organised and efficient. There have been no exclusions for many years because pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and respond well to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and conduct.
- Staff are alert to the possibility of bullying; they teach pupils about it and make sure they know what to do if it happens. Pupils say that bullying, in any form, is a very rare occurrence and they are confident that, if it did happen, it would be stopped. Many pupils and parents expressed positive comments about the caring and nurturing environment provided at the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Accidents are responded to promptly and any misdemeanours by pupils are usually quite minor.
- Systems and routines for making sure pupils receive the care and supervision that they need are understood by all and most pupils obey the school rules most of the time. At playtimes, a few pupils do wander into out-of-bounds areas or loiter in corridors when they should be playing outside.
- Because poor behaviour is uncommon, the procedures for recording and learning from it have been rather informal in the recent past. While this has not caused a problem to date, school leaders have recently tightened up this aspect of the school's work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher demonstrates a caring and supportive approach to school leadership. He knows the staff and pupils very well and takes a keen interest in their well-being. Consequently, all feel valued and aim to do their best. He has also shown that he will take firm action in the best interests of pupils' education. When teaching has not been good enough, for instance,

procedures have been followed to secure the necessary changes and improvements.

- Senior and middle leaders know how well the school is doing and work hard to maintain standards. When attainment in writing dipped in 2013, for example, they were quick to drive it back up to the usual good standard.
- Leaders regularly observe teaching, check pupils' books and progress data, and use their findings to plan for the future and to shape school policies. Even so, some of the checks on teaching and learning are not always as balanced or productive as they might be. For instance, while the whole-school focus on writing has clearly met with success, this single focus caused leaders to take their eye off school improvement in other areas of teaching and learning, such as science. As a result, their awareness of the quality and frequency of science teaching and pupils' progress is not as well informed as it should be. While the current school improvement plan does identify this concern, action has yet to be taken.
- Although the school's approach to science is under review, the breadth of subjects and activities provided through the curriculum and after school is a significant feature of the school's work. There is always a lot going on. There are numerous trips, including visits to several residential activity centres, which enrich learning and widen pupils' experiences. Many after-school clubs run all year round and the extensive school grounds are used to good effect for different sports and outdoor learning activities.
- International links are very good. There is a strong link with a school in Ghana and staff exchange visits have been made. The school is also building up links with schools in Sri Lanka and India. Instrument tuition is provided and, at the time of this inspection, pupils were preparing for a production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. Indeed, the school's provision for art, music and performance has led them to gain the Gold Artsmark Award four times.
- The primary school sport funding has been used to provide training for staff and to employ specialist teachers to teach pupils. The number of different sports on offer has increased and, while governors have yet to evaluate the full impact of this additional spending, pupils are adamant that this is a change for the better.
- The local authority keeps a distant watch on the school. It does not provide any additional support because it has confidence in the school leadership.
- The vast majority of responses on Parent View expressed positive views about the school and 98 per cent of respondents would recommend the school to other parents. In letters and comments to the inspectors, parents praised the school, particularly the high level of care provided. A small minority of parents think that progress rates are not fast enough in some year groups. Inspectors found that the school maintains good communication with parents, and also that pupils' progress overall is good.
- Safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. There is a greater rigour to their work because they have established routines and procedures that enable them to get the information they need and to check that teaching is good enough.
 - A link governor is assigned to each year group and follows this group up through the school. Each governor also has a subject responsibility. In these roles, governors meet with school staff to discuss progress and other educational matters. In addition, teachers regularly submit reports or make presentations to governors. Consequently, governors know about the quality of teaching and its effectiveness in helping all groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, to make progress.
 - The governors have updated the pay policy so that there is a clear link between staff performance and future pay awards. When aspects of teaching have caused concerns in the past, the governors have taken the proper action to bring about change.
 - Financial management is taken seriously and governors ensure that funding with a specific purpose, such as pupil premium and primary sport funding, is spent as it should be.
 - The governing body aspires to provide outstanding governance and has forged links with

governors from another school in order to share and learn from effective practice.

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	111236
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	439553

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Kilborn
Headteacher	Ian Devereux-Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2009
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