

# Luston Primary School

Westland View, Luston, Leominster, HR6 0EA

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong, effective and inspiring leadership which has helped the school to improve since the previous inspection.
- The school has been effective in developing the quality of teaching of new teachers and helping them to assume new leadership roles.
- The school uses additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively; the support provided has a positive impact on their progress.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen markedly since the previous inspection and are now above average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in all classes.
- The teachers plan interesting activities and use a good range of resources which engage and motivate the pupils and make them want to learn.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well and the more-able pupils receive sufficient challenge.
- Pupils' conduct and behaviour in lessons and around the school are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. The school has good procedures to keep pupils safe.
- The level of attendance has improved markedly over the last year; the level of attendance for most pupils is high.
- The governing body carries out its duties effectively, has an excellent understanding of the school and provides good support and challenge for the headteacher.
- The school provides a stimulating and interesting curriculum which helps pupils to develop a wide range of skills and to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- The school keeps close track of pupils' progress and uses information from assessment to identify pupils who might be falling behind. Effective support is then provided to help them catch up.
- The school makes good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, enabling them to make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils reach above-average standards in writing by the end of Year 6, their writing skills are not as strong as those in reading and mathematics.
- Although pupils apply well their understanding of phonics (the sounds which letters make) when reading, they do not always apply this understanding to their written work.
- The marking of pupils' work is not always rigorous enough in pointing out areas for improvement or where pupils have made mistakes.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunity to produce written work in subjects other than English, and not enough attention is given to the marking of such work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited each class on at least three occasions, observing all teachers for varying lengths of time. Many of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, five members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner, the GRT (Gypsy, Roma, Traveller) liaison officer, all of the teaching staff, most teaching assistants, and groups of pupils. Nobody from the local authority was available to talk about the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, data regarding pupils' progress, and documents relating to safeguarding and special educational needs.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' written work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils reading.
- The inspector took into account the views of 28 parents recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey of parents' views. This represented the views of almost half of the families whose children attend the school. The inspector also considered the views of the 20 members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Graham Sims, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is currently average but has been well above average in previous years.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. Around 10% of pupils are from Romany, Gypsy or Traveller backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school partway through their primary education is much higher than in most other schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are, or have been, eligible for free school meals) is above the national average.
- In January 2014, the school opened its own nursery. This was inspected separately in May 2014. The inspection report can be found on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- The school is part of a cluster of local schools whose leaders and staff meet together regularly.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Year 6.
- Three of the school's four classes have had new teachers in the last two years. A new headteacher, previously the teacher for pupils in Years 5 and 6, was appointed in September 2012.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in writing by:
  - helping pupils to apply their understanding of phonics to their written work
  - ensuring that the marking of pupils' written work is rigorous in pointing out areas for improvement and helping pupils to see where they have made mistakes
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to produce written work in subjects other than English and ensuring that such work is marked just as rigorously as their written work in English.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has created a united team of staff who show great dedication to the school and a firm commitment to improving their own practice. She has been courageous in tackling weaknesses in teaching and has provided good guidance for new teachers which has helped them to develop quickly into effective teachers.
- The school has taken a sensible approach to developing the leadership roles and responsibilities of other staff. New subject leaders have had the opportunity to shadow a more experienced person in the role before taking on full responsibility, thereby developing their capacity and effectiveness as leaders. Good use is made of the expertise within the local cluster of schools to discuss new initiatives and to provide further training where needed.
- The school is rigorous in evaluating its own performance. Staff work well together to implement new initiatives and then evaluate their effectiveness. Governors are also fully involved in the school's self-evaluation processes, either through their roles as link governors for specific subjects or aspects, or by asking challenging questions and holding staff accountable for their actions.
- The school has taken a measured approach to devising new systems of assessment in the light of national changes, and has been working in collaboration with other schools to explore the merits of new approaches. In the meantime, pupils' progress is tracked much more rigorously than in the past. Regular meetings are held to discuss the progress of pupils in each class, and effective action is taken to help any pupil who might be in danger of falling behind.
- The school has excellent procedures for ensuring that pupil premium funding is used to benefit those pupils for whom it is intended and that it is used effectively. Additional support groups are established as and when necessary, and pupils' progress when attending these groups is measured carefully to ensure that these interventions have maximum impact.
- The school provides a stimulating and interesting curriculum and places a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills. For example, all classes spend time outdoors in the 'forest school', which helps them to develop initiative and resilience. Trips, visitors to the school, residential visits, special subject days, opportunities to learn different musical instruments, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities all bring further enrichment. While due importance is given to the teaching of English and mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their writing skills through other subjects.
- The school and the governing body have responded well to the need to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures highlighted in the previous inspection. For example, an active link has been established with a school in Tanzania, and pupils in Key Stage 2 participated in a memorable multi-faith day visiting a mosque, a mandir and a gurdwara in Wolverhampton. These initiatives, sensitively led assemblies, learning about democratic processes through the school council, and the strong emphasis placed on values, prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Additional funding for physical education and sport has been used effectively. It has enabled staff to develop their expertise through attendance at courses and training events. Specialists have been brought into school to provide coaching for pupils. There are more opportunities for pupils to take part in external sports events. Opportunities for swimming have improved. As a result, sport and physical activity have a much higher profile in the school than before. All pupils in Key Stage 2 attend at least one sports club, of which there are many, and the school has recently been awarded a Silver Kitemark for physical education.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively and well, ensuring that the school is a safe place in which to learn. Governors are highly supportive of the school but are rigorous in holding the headteacher to account for the quality of education and standards achieved. They have an excellent

understanding of the school, gained through regular visits and active participation.

- The governing body has a good understanding of the quality of teaching, what is being done to enhance teachers' performance and how teachers are rewarded. Governors have supported the headteacher well when difficult decisions have had to be taken. They look carefully at the data on how well pupils are doing and ask challenging questions. They are actively involved in ensuring that additional funds are spent for the purposes for which they are intended and that they are used effectively.
- Governors are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation processes, and ensure that the headteacher's performance is monitored rigorously. Their involvement in, and full support for, the establishment of a nursery are indicative of their commitment to long-term planning, their active role in strategic planning and their concern to ensure the financial security of the school.
- Governors play an active role in engaging with parents, both informally when parents bring their children to and collect them from school, and more formally through attendance at meetings with parents. The extremely high level of satisfaction expressed by parents who responded to Parent View indicates a highly effective level of engagement with parents.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' friendliness and politeness make a major contribution to the positive learning environment and friendly atmosphere of the school.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their interest in what their teachers have to say, and their willingness to get down to work straightaway ensure that lessons proceed without disruption. Pupils cooperate with their teachers and with each other. They respond well when asked to work as a group or with a partner, and they concentrate well when asked to work on their own.
- Pupils show good respect for their classrooms, the school's facilities and resources, and the outdoor environment. At break time, for example, many pupils were observed crossing the playground to deposit wrappers and apple cores into the waste bin. Their consideration helps to maintain an attractive school environment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are very conscious of the importance of helping pupils to develop an understanding of health and safety. Older and younger pupils working outside in the forest school, for example, were asked to identify possible safety risks and draw these to the attention of the whole group. Adults who volunteer or are employed by the school are subjected to proper scrutiny to make sure they are suitable to work with children.
- Through daily assemblies and special activities, the school provides pupils with good guidance on how to keep themselves safe. Posters on display around the school, for example, show that pupils have a good understanding of e-safety, of different types of bullying and what to do should any bullying occur.
- Through thoughtful teaching and regular discussion of the school's values of the month, pupils gain a good understanding of how to act as responsible and considerate citizens. As a result, pupils show consideration for each other.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say, and the school's records confirm, that there is almost no bullying. Occasionally, pupils fall out with each other, but such occurrences do not last for long, and the supportive nature of staff and other pupils leads to quick restoration of harmony.
- Prior to the last academic year, attendance had been well below the national average. The headteacher and governors tightened the school's response to parents' requests to take holidays during term time. Attendance has improved markedly and was broadly average in 2014. Attendance figures are adversely affected by some pupils from Traveller backgrounds who are absent for long periods, indicating that the attendance of the great majority of pupils is high.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire recorded exceptionally positive views of the school,

saying that they are very pleased with the standards of behaviour and that their children are very happy at the school. Staff, governors and pupils expressed equally positive views of pupils' behaviour and the general atmosphere within school.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The teaching is of good quality throughout the school and helps pupils to progress from below-average starting points to reach above-average standards by the time they leave. Teachers and teaching assistants have an excellent rapport with the pupils which encourages them to participate actively in lessons.
- The teachers plan interesting activities and use a good range of resources which engage and motivate the pupils and make them want to learn. Classroom environments are attractive. Careful attention is given to displays, which either celebrate pupils' work or provide them with interesting information or useful prompts which help them to learn. As a result, pupils quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and try hard to succeed.
- Teachers are very aware of the wide range of abilities in their mixed-age classes. They not only know the pupils in their own class well but, because of the small size of the school, they know pupils in other classes well. They regularly discuss as a staff how they might motivate and support individual pupils. They plan work carefully and group pupils effectively to meet the differing needs. As a result, pupils of all abilities are given work which is appropriate to their capabilities and level of development. Those with additional learning needs are supported well and the more-able pupils receive sufficient challenge.
- Teachers in all classes make good use of teaching assistants, who are well trained, are involved in the planning of each day's work and contribute valuable insights into pupils' progress. Although much of their time is spent supporting pupils who might otherwise struggle with their work, they also provide good support for all other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils receive a wide range of additional and effective support through small special intervention groups for English and mathematics and through one-to-one tuition to help develop their reading skills.
- Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Particularly effective are the half-termly home-learning projects which also engage families in pupils' learning. Pupils have been provided with writing books to use at home to encourage the development of wider writing skills. Parents are encouraged to attend regular 'Tips'n'Tricks' information sessions, which give them guidance on how they might help their children's learning at home.
- The quality of teachers' marking has improved over the last year and helps pupils to see more clearly than before how successful they have been in meeting particular objectives. The system of highlighting good features in pink and areas for development in green is used consistently by all teachers. However, the marking is not always rigorous enough in pointing out areas for improvement or where pupils have made mistakes. Occasionally, overgenerous use of praise gives pupils an over-inflated view of the quality of their work. Not enough attention is given to the marking of pupils' writing in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is thorough and there are some particularly enriching opportunities for pupils to learn in other subjects. However, not enough use is made of these opportunities to help pupils consolidate and develop their writing skills.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary widely, but have been below those expected at their age for the last few years. The communication and early literacy skills of some children are particularly weak. The attainment of many of the pupils who join the school partway through their primary education are below those expected for their age, and a few pupils join with no previous experience of school.
- In the Reception Year, children benefit from being taught alongside pupils in Year 1 for part of the day

and in their own small group at other times. Because they receive close personal attention, they make good progress in all areas of learning, although not all reach the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. In 2014, just over half of the children reached a good level of development before moving into Year 1. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

- Since the last inspection, pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 1 to reach standards which have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Results in 2014 were, however, below average, reflecting the fact that half of the pupils in this group had had disruption to their early education and a number of pupils had particularly severe learning difficulties. Standards in the current Year 2 are set to return to previous levels.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen markedly since the previous inspection. They have been above average for the last four years, and progress from Year 2 to Year 6 has been consistently better than in the majority of schools. For the last three years, almost all pupils have made the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics, and the proportion making more than expected progress has been above the national average. In 2014, seven out of the 12 pupils made more than expected progress and, for a few, their progress was outstanding.
- The school has dealt well with developing pupils' mathematical skills, an issue highlighted in the previous inspection. In 2014, all pupils reached the nationally expected standard at the end of Year 6, and a third exceeded this level.
- Pupils develop into confident, interested readers as they move through the school. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 (a test to see how well pupils can link letters and sounds) dipped from previously above-average levels. However, because of the teaching of phonics, even the weakest readers show that they are developing well their ability to read unfamiliar words.
- While almost all pupils reach the nationally expected standard in writing by the end of Year 6, pupils' writing skills are not quite as strong as those in reading and mathematics. Pupils use their understanding of phonics well when reading, but do not always apply the same skills when producing their written work.
- The school is assiduous in tracking pupils' progress and identifying any pupils who might be falling behind, whether this is because they have been away from school, as is the case with some children from Traveller families, or because they have special educational needs. A wide variety of well-targeted intervention groups have been designed to improve very specific aspects of pupils' work. These have had a big impact on pupils' progress, enabling them to catch up quickly over the few weeks of intensive support they receive, and ensure that they, too, continue to make good progress.
- Pupils from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller backgrounds receive exceptionally good support from the school and from the GRT liaison officer, and no efforts are spared to help them catch up with any lost ground and to ensure that they have every opportunity to succeed.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to provide additional support for all disadvantaged pupils and has had a very positive impact on these pupils' progress, particularly in reading, where they receive individual attention. Although there was a gap of about a year between the performance of these pupils and other pupils in the school at the end of Year 6 in 2014, their performance was much better than similar pupils nationally. The funding is being used well to reduce gaps in attainment in all year groups.
- Over the past few years, the school has enabled the most-able pupils to achieve the highest possible level (Level 6) in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and the more-able pupils to exceed the level expected for their age. Data indicate that nearly all of these pupils achieve well although, sometimes, their work is not marked rigorously enough to help them achieve even higher standards.



**The early years provision is good**

- Children receive a good start to their education when they join the Reception Year. Although many join with weak communication and early literacy skills, they make good progress in learning letter sounds, developing early writing skills and acquiring the ability to read simple words.
- Although Reception children are taught alongside pupils in Year 1 for part of the time, the highly favourable ratio of adults to pupils means that Reception children can be taught together as a small group for much of the time and receive close individual attention. The class teacher and teaching assistants know the children extremely well and make sure that they adapt their teaching to meet the specific learning needs of individual pupils.
- The friendly, caring and supportive atmosphere, and the examples of older pupils, contribute to the rapid development of the children's personal, physical and emotional skills. Children engage in a wide range of stimulating activities indoors, in the small outdoor area and in the forest school. They learn well how to cope with more formal class teaching situations and have the opportunity to choose their own activities and develop their independence.
- The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is managed effectively by an experienced teacher, who also provides support for other schools within the local cluster. She involves teaching assistants fully in the planning of activities, and in assessment and record keeping. She is also forging strong relationships with the newly established nursery.



## 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>	116707
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448469

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Primary
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sebastian Bowen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Freeman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01568 615753
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