

Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School

Warburton Street, Newark, NG24 1LT

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- School leaders' effective teamwork has led to improvements in all aspects since the previous inspection.
- Governors help the school to improve by providing strong support and challenge.
- Leaders' good efforts have raised pupils' attendance to average and have ensured pupils' good behaviour. Pupils are eager to learn; they listen well to each other and respect each other's opinions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in a range of different circumstances, including those related to the internet.
- The quality of teaching is rigorously checked by leaders. This has led to improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have risen in every subject.
- Reading standards have risen in response to several motivating strategies introduced for this purpose.
- Teaching is good because teachers' subject knowledge is invariably good. Tasks often engage pupils' curiosity to find things out and they learn quickly.
- Strong teaching in Year 6 has led to an above-average proportion of pupils achieving the highest Level 6 in 2014, in writing and in mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in most areas of learning. They benefit from careful nurturing care.
- Most parents who offered a view would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Activities in communication, language and literacy in the early years do not always capture boys' interest, so that their progress is less rapid than in other subjects.
- Except in Year 6, work set is sometimes too easy to get the best out of the most-able pupils.
- The targets teachers set for pupils in literacy and numeracy are not always used to accelerate progress in other subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers' marking does not lead to prompt improvements in pupils' work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, half of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, talked with them in lessons and evaluated a large sample of their work. Some of this work scrutiny was carried out with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- General observations were made across the school of pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and of the additional support provided both for pupils who speak English as an additional language, and for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of Governing Body, the headteacher and the school's staff including senior and subject leaders. In addition, the lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents and carers and looking at the analysis of the school's previous parental surveys. Inspectors also considered parental correspondence received during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at a range of documents including the school's improvement plans, information about pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Staff views were taken into consideration in discussions and through scrutiny of questionnaires completed by 20 members of staff.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Danielle Thomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. There is one class for each year group from Nursery to Year 6 inclusive. Children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis.
- A large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. A higher than average proportion of pupils in the school, currently one in five, speak English as an additional language. These pupils are mostly newly arrived from Lithuania and Poland.
- A quarter of the pupils, an above-average proportion, join or leave the school part way through their primary education. Many of those who join have not spoken English before.
- Two-fifths of pupils are disadvantaged and so eligible for the pupil premium additional funding, which is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, at one in ten, is below average.
- The school is part of the Cotgrave Candleby Lane Teaching Alliance and the Newark Family of Schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Before-school care is managed by the governing body and included in this inspection
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced considerable staff turbulence, but staffing is now stable.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that in the early years tasks and activities lead to faster progress and higher standards for boys in communication, language and literacy
 - increasing the challenge for the most-able pupils throughout the school so that they make the same rapid progress as those in Year 6
 - refining the use of targets to ensure they are used more widely to guide pupils
 - using marking consistently to support improvements in pupils' literacy and numeracy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers at all levels have convincingly improved every aspect of pupils' experience at school as well as developing their own strengths through training.
- Teamwork is exceptionally strong. Senior staff rose to the challenge of leading a school that required improvement. Checks on teaching are rigorous and have eliminated any weaknesses. Staff have all 'bought in' to the culture where strong teaching flourishes, where pupils are well cared for, attend school regularly, and achieve and behave well.
- Work with the school's partners has made a highly positive impact on teaching and on pupils' achievements. A new way of assessing pupils is being piloted this year as a result of close consultation. The local authority provides good support and has ensured leaders, at all levels, have the skills to sustain further improvements without external support.
- The recent allocation of specific leadership roles to some teachers has increased the school's capacity to improve and is bringing a greater focus to aspects of its work. Subject leaders make a good contribution to the school's effectiveness.
- A rigorous system to manage teachers' performance is in place and this is linked to the progress that pupils make. Teachers only receive a pay award if the progress of the pupils they teach is good.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to provide extra support to identified pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is varied and constantly under review. Topics, activities and wider educational experiences, such as visits and themes, are designed with care. All pupils are being taught to understand British values and what it means to live in modern Britain.
- Diversity and equality of opportunity are central to the school's aims and are evident in pupils' work as well as in their highly positive relationships. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- The school is making effective use of the government's additional primary sports funding. Specialist sports coaches are highly thought of by the pupils and offer opportunities to compete with other schools in football and netball. These opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Child protection processes are robust and any issue is dealt with quickly and sensitively by senior leaders.
- Leadership of the early years is developing well. Leaders are fully aware that the work to ensure boys attain as well as girls in the early years is not yet complete.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone stringent review and is now much more effective than in the past. The new Chair has made a strong start in ensuring governors have an accurate picture of the school's performance in relation to other schools. Governors have a clear understanding of the information relating to pupils' achievement.
 - Governors monitor the work of the school closely through regular visits. They ask searching questions of school leaders about pupils' achievement. Governors have a good understanding of how the teaching staff contribute to the overall performance of the school and they have acted effectively to tackle weaknesses. They are involved in ensuring the recruitment of high-calibre candidates to join the school. They make sure that there is a secure link between salary progression and teachers' performance.
 - Governors have a firm grasp of school finances, including the deployment of the pupil premium grant and sports funding.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are routinely friendly and welcoming. They appreciate the support that teachers and other adults provide. From the earliest age, in Nursery, they say how much they enjoy school and all that they do there.
- Opportunities for pupils to take wider responsibility are undertaken seriously, for example as 'Play Leaders' at break time, and as members of the school council.
- Parents are mostly very positive about the school and the way pupils behave, and most would recommend it to others.
- Pupils' attendance has risen and is average. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and all staff stress the importance of regular attendance and its link to good achievement. Before-school care and the daily 'Read-Feed', where pupils who come into school early to read and are given a free breakfast, offer a good start to the day for those who participate. Pupils greatly enjoy the awards and celebrations for attendance, including sessions on the 'bouncy castle' for the best attenders.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, on a few occasions, adults need to intervene to ensure that some pupils concentrate more in lessons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All aspects of safe practice are monitored. Systems to check on all adults who come into contact with pupils are good and the school works closely with local partners to ensure the safety of any potentially vulnerable pupil or family.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, on roads, near water and on the internet. In Reception, children are careful not to push others in their eagerness to play. Pupils throughout the school are respectful of the needs of others in school and in the playground and say, 'We keep each other safe'.
- There are very few incidents relating to any form of bullying or inappropriate racist language. There have been no exclusions. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying but say that this is not an issue at their school. Records checked for individual concerns show that incidents are carefully logged and any necessary action is promptly taken.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching helps pupils to achieve well, particularly in literacy, reading and mathematics. Teaching is continuing to improve strongly due to the effective support given by senior leaders.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. They work closely together to plan and teach a diverse range of activities that often inspires pupils' curiosity, amusement and interest. Additional support is put in place quickly to help any pupil identified as at risk of underachieving and this is monitored closely. This is why pupils make good progress, including: disadvantaged pupils; disabled pupils and those with special educational needs; and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers' expertise in how pupils learn often leads to rapid progress. For example, in Year 2, 'touchy-feely' bags helped pupils to feel and smell items without seeing them, to inspire their writing of riddles; and in Year 4, demonstrations of cooking national dishes by a Caribbean chef inspired pupils' excellent writing of descriptive and appealing menus.
- Strong individual support for pupils who are new to speaking English help them make good progress. For example, specialist support staff work with the pupils using everyday objects and experiences such as shopping and food items, which encourages the development of language.

- Teachers place strong emphasis on homework, particularly for research to support their projects. Pupils proudly showed inspectors their homework books, showing a very high standard of work and excellent presentation. The themes enable learning to be deepened and extended, so accelerating progress.
- Evidence from pupils' books and discussions with them show that, with the exception of Year 6, there are occasions when the work set in class is too easy and does not enable the most able to extend their learning. It is only because of intensive work in Year 6 that the most-able pupils reach Level 6.
- The individual 'Rainbow Sheets' being piloted as part of the new system of assessment are popular with pupils and effective in checking understanding. Pupils' six-weekly written reflections on their progress help them to understand and consolidate what they have learned over time. However, the literacy and numeracy targets set periodically through the year, and seen in use in some classes, are more limited in their impact on pupils' progress. They are not checked frequently and they are not to hand when pupils apply their literacy or numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking is often effective. Pupils much enjoy the 'Tickled Pink' and 'Green for Growth' comments written in appropriately different colours on their literacy and numeracy work. They are eager to respond to these comments. However, the guidance that teachers write is sometimes merely a positive comment without explaining what the pupil has to do to improve, so this is not always helpful in leading to prompt improvements.
- Teachers in the early years and throughout the school create exciting classroom displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and help remind them of important facts.
- Sometimes, activities in the early years do not appeal to boys, and when this happens, their progress in communication, language and literacy slows.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment and progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 have showed strong improvement in all subjects since the previous inspection. In 2012, standards were mostly significantly below average. In 2014, for the second year, attainment by the end of Year 2 was average; and by the end of Year 6, attainment was significantly above the national average in writing and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and a little above the national average in reading and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence including the school's assessment data, which has been rigorously moderated by the local authority, shows that all pupils are making good progress. Pupils readily explain their thinking and contribute to discussions in class. Their books show that they produce a good amount of work. In mathematics they make good progress in working through a range of different topics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress due to the school's good work and initiatives to help them. In 2014, Year 6, these pupils were four months ahead of others in school in writing and eight months ahead of others nationally. In reading, they were two months ahead of their classmates and others nationally. In mathematics, they were six months behind others in school, and four months behind others nationally; inspection evidence shows this gap is closing rapidly due to the focused support in mathematics that is offered by both teachers and teaching assistants.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make progress in line with their peers. Additional adult support is used effectively to provide the special help individual pupils need in order to be successful.
- The school places a strong emphasis on the importance of reading. Pupils make good progress in learning about phonics (the sounds letters make). Results of the screening test in Year 1 are above average. The 'Read-Feed', regular 'Book-nics' (picnics but with books), and the periodic appearance of 'Book Man, the Superhero' (who is rumoured to be the deputy headteacher) all serve to stimulate pupils' interest and excitement in reading, and accelerate their progress.

- In the younger age groups in particular, there are occasions where the most-able pupils are given work that is too easy. This includes, for example, pupils 'marking time' while waiting for others in the class to finish, with no more challenging work available. Even so, these pupils make good progress overall. In Year 6 the levels of challenge are stepped up so that more pupils than average reached the highest Level 6 in writing and in mathematics in 2014.
- In the early years, although most children make good progress, boys do not do as well as girls in communication, language and literacy.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led. Leaders monitor children's progress with care. They are quick to put in place additional support for children who may need extra help. Staff are well trained. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. They particularly like the 'Learning Journeys' which track their child's learning.
- Children enter with skills and abilities that are often at a very early stage of development, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The increasing proportion of children who are new to speaking English are given strong support so that they quickly learn to understand and make good progress. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are also given strong support and learn well.
- Behaviour is routinely good. Children are used to taking turns as well as listening to each other. All adults successfully foster high expectations, positive relationships and a strong commitment to keeping children safe at all times.
- The teaching of phonics is good and this is where the most-able children shine. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively with different groups to help them make good rates of progress in their understanding of word recognition. However, in other literacy and numeracy work, the most-able children are sometimes not given sufficiently challenging tasks and this slows their progress.
- Good teaching and a stimulating range of experiences help most of the children to make good progress and prepare them well for entry to Year 1. Even so, the proportion reaching the standard expected nationally for children of their age is below average. This is because boys' attainment in communication, language and literacy is below average. The school is revising its provision for boys to improve their attainment, but the impact is not yet evident.

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	122595
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	449021

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Roberts
Headteacher	Sarah Holland
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2014
Telephone number	01636 683353
Fax number	01636 683352
Email address	office@loverslane.notts.sch.uk

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