

Longford Primary School

Ascot Drive, Cannock, WS11 1PD

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Until this year, leaders did not tackle staff changes effectively enough to ensure that pupils made sustained good progress in writing and mathematics. As a result the quality of teaching and achievement declined after the last inspection and have not fully recovered.
- Teachers do not show consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Sometimes the work set for them in lessons is too easy and the work in their books is not presented well.
- Some teachers are not always clear about the next learning steps pupils need to take to build effectively on what pupils already know and can do. As a result teachers do not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons requires improvement. Sometimes this disrupts learning.
- The very recent improvements in the early years have not yet led to significant gains in children's achievement.
- Leaders have not been rigorous enough in checking the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing.
- Some subject leaders do not have a clear overview of where their subjects are taught well and where support is required.
- Governors do not fully understand how the school needs to improve. They do not hold leaders to account well enough, or check sufficiently how effective the school's actions are in improving teaching and raising standards.

The school has the following strengths

- The good teaching in some classes, particularly in Years 2 and 6, is now helping pupils to make good progress.
- The school looks after vulnerable pupils well. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils are supported well and make good progress throughout the school.
- Leaders have ensured that assessments of how pupils are doing give an accurate picture of achievement. This is helping to raise standards.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as on the roads and when using the internet.
- Pupils make good progress in reading.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 23 lessons, five of which were seen together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, two groups of pupils, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Informal discussions were held with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 67 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own parental questionnaires, individual communications from parents and pupils and the 42 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including: the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; records of behaviour and safety; school improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David West	Additional Inspector
Wendell Gopaul	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a part-time Nursery class when they are three years old. They then move to one of the full-time Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years leader took up post in October 2014. Currently four teachers are working at the school on a temporary basis, covering for teachers on maternity leave.
- The school has been supported by a Local Leader of Education from the Britannia Teaching School Alliance since September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to raise standards in literacy and numeracy by ensuring that all teachers:
 - show high expectations of what pupils can achieve, by providing challenging work and insisting that it is presented to a high standard
 - fully understand what pupils need to learn next and communicate this clearly to them
 - set work that engages groups of pupils, so they do not lose focus and disrupt learning.
- Improve teaching and achievement in the early years by developing and extending the good practices that have been recently introduced.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching
 - developing subject leaders' skills in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility
 - improving the quality of governance, so that the governors can check more carefully how well the school is doing.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Some inaccurate assessments in the past have given senior leaders a picture of pupils' achievement in some parts of the school that were too generous. As a result, they have not checked rigorously enough how the quality of teaching has affected pupils' attainment. These weaknesses are gradually being tackled, but not yet sufficiently effectively to ensure that teaching and learning are good.
- Not all subject leaders are clear about where their subjects are being taught well, and where the weaknesses lie. Consequently, while they support teachers through whole-staff training sessions, they are not always able to identify where specific help is needed.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly check progress data to make sure no groups of pupils are falling behind. Now that assessments are more accurate they have a clearer picture of how well pupils are doing and where they need to accelerate progress. With this information, senior leaders are being more effective in raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and improving the quality of teaching and behaviour in lessons.
- The pupil premium is used well. Disadvantaged pupils are supported individually or in small groups to help them catch up with their classmates. Help is provided both in lessons and outside the classroom. For example, 'nurture groups' before school help pupils to get ready and become eager to learn.
- The school's appraisal system, which is designed to reward teachers only if their pupils achieve well, is becoming more rigorous. As assessments are more accurate, the extent to which teachers can be held accountable for pupils' achievement is more secure. Teachers are helped to meet their challenging targets through support from other colleagues and training courses.
- The school has formed some partnerships with other local schools to give staff the opportunity to share expertise and take part in joint training. They have recently started working with the Britannia Teaching School Alliance. This has been particularly helpful for members of the leadership team.
- The primary physical education and sport premium funding has improved physical education for pupils. It has paid for specialist coaches to work alongside staff, providing high-quality coaching for pupils while helping staff to develop their own sports teaching techniques. The coaches also run after-school clubs. As a result, more pupils are taking part in sporting activities and their sporting and social skills have improved.
- The subjects pupils learn are interesting. Some teachers use the different subjects well to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils in Year 4 used the story of David and Goliath from their religious education lesson to write a character description of the giant in their literacy books.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed well through the curriculum and the school's values of respect and consideration for each other. Adults act as good role models through their courteous and caring attitudes. Pupils respond well and show consideration to each other as they hold open doors, share equipment and look out for younger pupils when moving around school.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and recognise the importance of respecting others' beliefs. For example, while learning about Judaism pupils showed a mature understanding of why the synagogue was so important and asked sensible questions to clarify their understanding. Signs such as 'we are equally different' around the school underpin its drive for promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Pupils are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand the need to have rules for a harmonious society. All classes compile their class rules and pupils try hard to abide by them. The school council is democratically elected and pupils say this is a fair way of choosing representatives.

- Safeguarding arrangements in school are rigorous and effective. Policies and procedures are used consistently well. Leaders ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and that all staff are well trained on safeguarding issues.
- The local authority was slow to recognise that the school's standards were falling. As a result, it has only recently provided effective support. Since September 2014 the local authority has supported the leadership of the school and early years provision well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very positive about the school but do not understand how much it needs to improve in some areas. The Chair of the Governing Body visits regularly and appreciates the shortcomings of governance. Colleagues are very willing, but are not effectively fulfilling the roles required of them. In meetings they ask senior leaders questions, but do not follow these up with actions to check if improvements are happening.
 - Governors have a general understanding that the quality of teaching has suffered from significant numbers of staff changes recently. They know that the appraisal system is helping to ensure that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is tackled effectively. For example, governors are aware how much the early years provision has improved in recent months.
 - Some governors find data difficult to understand. This means that they are not totally clear about where improvements are necessary and where pupils are achieving well. They do, however, appreciate the importance of checking that the pupil premium is being spent effectively to help disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They know that gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are narrowing. Governors are aware that the sports funding is helping to improve pupils' physical education and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, pupils quickly lose concentration and find it difficult to focus on their work. On these occasions, they become distracted. On other occasions, pupils sit back and let others make all the contributions, demonstrating little effort to develop their own understanding or skills.

- Around school and on the playground, pupils behave well. They are pleasant, polite and eager to share their ideas about the school. Older pupils look out for younger ones and readily escort them from one building to the next to ensure their safety.
- Pupils are proud to take on responsibilities. The school council is active in promoting improvements to the school and pupils are encouraged to take any suggestions or concerns to council members. During the inspection, members of the school council wrote to the inspectors, outlining the differences they had made to the school and how they had organised fund-raising activities for a range of charities.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good and the system of using 'warning' and 'red' cards usually works well. Most parents who completed Parent View disagreed and said that behaviour is not good. However, the vast majority of the 181 responses to the school's most recent parental survey agreed with the pupils. While behaviour in lessons is not good, inspectors observed social behaviour around school to be good and pupils said that this was representative of everyday behaviour.
- Pupils who have complex behavioural needs are supported well. Additional help in the classroom, consistently applied systems such as 'time out' and specially trained staff help them improve their behaviour and to work effectively alongside their classmates. Other pupils show a mature understanding that some pupils find behaving well difficult.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that there is always an adult they can go to if they have a problem. They appreciate that the site is secure and there

are plenty of adults looking after them at playtimes.

- Pupils reported that the school regularly has fire drills. They understand the importance of this and talked confidently about fire safety in general.
- Pupils told inspectors that there is very little bullying in the school. Any incidents that happen are quickly dealt with by the adults. Pupils were very clear about what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including physical, racist and cyber bullying. They were also clear about the difference between bullying and 'falling out'.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe outside school. They appreciate the need for vigilance when using the internet and know not to give away personal details online. They also know how to stay safe on the roads and where it is safe, or unsafe, to play.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching quality has been affected by many staff changes. It is improving this year, but some teachers do not yet show high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This means that work is sometimes too easy for pupils, or pupils spend too long going over work they already know. Likewise, teachers' expectations of the way pupils record their learning are not high enough in some classes. As a result, teachers occasionally accept work that is untidy and careless.
- Teachers do not always build effectively on what pupils already know. This is sometimes because teachers are not certain of the next step in learning and so are not fully able to guide pupils on how to improve their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent and requires improvement. For example, some teachers do not build on the skills learnt in one area of mathematics in a different context. This means that pupils are not able to see how their learning links together. In classes where teaching is good, pupils can articulate what they have learnt and how they have improved. For example, pupils in Year 5 solving mathematical problems using different methods compared their results. They were able to explain to the teacher what methods they had learnt through seeing how other pupils had tackled the same problem.
- Similarly, writing is taught well in some classes but not all. Some teachers do not ensure that pupils have successfully learnt one skill before moving on. They allow work to remain unfinished, which means that pupils are not fully prepared for the next step in learning.
- Reading is taught consistently well. The school has changed the way it teaches reading and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to read aloud to adults and to each other. Pupils in all years have made good progress in reading since September 2014. During the inspection pupils read to an inspector fluently and with good expression. Those who found reading difficult used their skills in phonics (the sounds letters represent in words) well to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Additional adults who work alongside class teachers support pupils well. They are trained well and demonstrate this in their questioning of pupils to check their understanding and develop their learning. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils all benefit from this high-quality support and achieve well.
- Where teachers show higher expectations, such as in Year 6, work is well presented and it is easy to see the good progress pupils are making.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement has varied since the last inspection in line with the quality of teaching, and although improving it is not yet good.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils had not made the progress they should have done since leaving Key Stage 1.

Standards were below average in reading, writing and mathematics, and had fallen since the previous inspection. However, Year 6 pupils had made rapid progress in their final year in school, which narrowed a large gap between their attainment and that which is typical for their age. This gap had been brought about by weak teaching when these pupils were younger.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014 were broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. There had been no rise in standards since the previous inspection and standards in writing have dipped. Pupils began from lower starting points than in previous years, but their progress still required improvement. The most recent check on how well pupils in Year 1 understand phonics was below average. Better teaching of phonics, and starting the learning at a much younger age in the early years classes, is now improving pupils' phonic skills.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve well by the end of Key Stage 2. They were two terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics, three terms behind in reading, and just over two terms behind in writing. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were four and a half terms behind in mathematics, three and a half terms behind in writing and four terms behind in reading. However, the disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making better progress than other pupils and the attainment gap is narrowing. There is no gap in attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils currently in Year 6 in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and high levels of support provided. As a result they achieve well and their differing needs are met effectively.
- The progress of the most able pupils varies throughout the school. In classes where teaching is good they make good progress, but where it is weaker the progress they make is slower and requires improvement. However, a growing number of pupils are working at higher levels than in previous years. For example, twice as many pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain high levels in reading, writing and mathematics than in September 2014, which brings them in line with the national average for that year.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- A change in leadership designed to improve early years provision in September 2014 faltered when the newly appointed leader left. The current leader has made significant improvements to the learning experiences for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. However, these very recent changes have not yet significantly raised children's attainment. As a result, teaching and achievement require improvement.
- Children learn in a vibrant and safe place. They behave well and are keen to talk about their learning. For example, a child in the Nursery used pictures of different fish to tell the inspector which toy was an angel fish.
- Under the new leadership, teaching is improving. As a result, children's skills are developing at a quicker rate. Teachers have higher expectations of what children can achieve. For example, children working with the teacher confidently used mathematical ideas such as 'putting a number in our head and adding on' to help them solve addition problems. Others were enthused to write about the 'Big Bad Wolf' and were starting to form letters and words well.
- Many children start school with skills below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. Their physical, personal, social and emotional skills are better. The proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development on leaving the Reception classes in 2014 was below average. The progress children are currently making in the Reception classes means that more are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the year.
- In 2014, children were not well prepared for work in Key Stage 1 and found the move difficult. Children currently in the Reception classes are now making faster progress and developing good attitudes to learning. This very recent change is preparing them more effectively for their move to Year 1.

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	124074
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	456287

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	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Yates
Headteacher	Helen Hedar
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2012
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