

Little Stanion Primary School

Roman Road, Little Stanion, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 8TD

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has a great determination to make further improvements; she is well supported by other school leaders and governors.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and settle in quickly as a result of caring staff and a well-organised learning environment.
- Teaching of the basic skills is thorough; pupils enjoy learning through the different curriculum themes.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of strong leadership. All groups of pupils make good progress and standards are above average for some pupils.
- Governors are knowledgeable and provide a good level of support and challenge to the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and feel safe at school; the school has robust systems in place to follow up absences and keep children safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics; some of the most-able pupils do not achieve as much as they could.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and use their basic skills in other subjects; the quality of handwriting and presentation in books is inconsistent.
- Sometimes teaching does not support pupils to understand how to improve their work; occasionally, the level of challenge is not well matched to pupils' abilities and work is too hard or too easy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring a greater proportion of the most-able pupils achieve beyond the expected levels for their age
 - improving opportunities for pupils to write at length, and use their basic skills, in a range of subjects and for different purposes
 - improving handwriting and presentation in books.

- Improve the quality of teaching in all subjects by:
 - supporting pupils in developing self-assessment skills so that all pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work
 - using assessment information more sharply to match work to the different abilities of the pupils and providing additional challenge for the most-able pupils
 - using the expertise within the school to share good practice and support colleagues.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher leads a relentless drive for improvement and is well supported by other school leaders and governors. The school development plan accurately identifies areas that can be improved; action plans map out what needs to be done and by when.
- School leaders and governors regularly check the work of the school and monitor how well pupils are doing. The headteacher and subject leaders evaluate the quality of teaching by visiting lessons and looking at work in pupils' books. The headteacher makes sure that teachers receive training to ensure they have the necessary skills and professional knowledge, particularly for those who are new to leadership roles. While there are some teachers who have particular knowledge, expertise and experience that can support colleagues and improve the quality of teaching further, not enough is currently being done to share best practice.
- Leaders promote a culture of respect and tolerance, and encourage an open-minded approach to learning as expressed in the school's vision, 'freedom for innovation and creativity'. The curriculum provides a thorough programme of the basic skills in literacy and mathematics, set in interesting themes that engage the pupils. For example, pupils responded enthusiastically to their learning within the theme of 'roller coasters' in Years 3 and 4.
- Regular, focused discussions provide pupils with the opportunity to deepen their thinking about a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and explore how fundamental British values are lived out, so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. A class of older pupils was seen discussing the question 'Are we different?' They responded with the view that 'we are all human', and then raised questions of their own, for example 'If we are all the same, why do we treat important people differently?'
- The pupil premium funding received by the school is spent effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. School leaders and governors monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely; the spending is checked in detail to ensure there is good value for money. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also well supported and make at least expected progress.
- The PE and sport premium for primary schools is spent mainly on resources and specialist physical education teaching. This ensures that pupils get good-quality teaching in a wider range of activities. Pupils take part in local competitions with other schools. Sports activities are part of the school's extra-curricular provision and promote healthy lifestyles.
- There is a range of information for parents on the school website and there are regular opportunities for parents to find out what their children are learning through parents' consultation evenings and other events. Parents praise the school for its work in promoting good academic standards and are pleased with the progress made by their children.
- The local authority has provided effective support since the last inspection by supporting leadership development in the school and promoting opportunities for work with other schools.
- **The governance of the school**
 - is knowledgeable and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors know how well the school compares to other schools nationally because they visit the school regularly and ask questions of school leaders
 - ensures the headteacher's performance management and teacher appraisal are carried out. Governors have a good understanding of how salary progression links to performance
 - has a good range of skills that bring benefits to the school. Governors have specific responsibilities, linked to specific subjects or aspects of the school's work; training ensures they are well informed and able to carry out their roles effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is effective in creating a safe culture and environment for pupils. Robust systems ensure that any concerns are followed up and resolved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- School leaders have set clear expectations for all teachers and, as a result, the teaching of basic skills is good. Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and spark pupils' interest. For example, following on

from a visit to the National Space Centre, Year 5 and 6 pupils were asked to design packaging for 'space food', providing a purpose for using a range of mathematics skills.

- Teachers' questioning of pupils is good. They check pupils' understanding during lessons and ask questions that encourage pupils to justify their thinking and explain their learning.
- The assessment system is very thorough and pupils' progress is tracked in detail. Teaching is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 as a result of planning lessons that make good use of assessment information, providing a good level of challenge for all abilities. However, in some lessons, this information is not used sharply enough to match work to the different abilities of the pupils, and sometimes work is too hard or too easy. The most-able pupils do not always have the opportunity to extend their learning and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils know their personal targets for improvement and understand the systems in place to check their progress towards these targets. Older pupils are able to explain what they need to do to improve their work as a result of carefully planned lessons that make clear how pupils can check their own work. Younger pupils do not always have criteria against which to check their work and are more reliant on adults to tell them if they have been successful.
- The wider curriculum provides a range of contexts for learning and opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge. However, there are not enough opportunities to write at length in different subjects, so these pieces of work do not always reflect the pupils' knowledge of basic skills.
- Books are regularly marked and note where pupils have achieved their targets. Feedback to help pupils with their next steps of learning is often verbal. Time is set aside to give pupils the opportunity to respond to marking and feedback, which pupils find helpful. Work in books is not always well presented and the school's handwriting policy is not yet fully implemented.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the opportunities the school provides and are keen to do their best; for example, a Year 5 pupil told inspectors, 'I like writing because the teacher gives you a seed and you can make it grow'.
- Pupils say that the school is a safe place to be and they understand the need to check who is on the premises at any given time; registers are used 'so they know you're there'. Pupils value their teachers, saying that they 'make me feel really safe' and 'they look after us if we get hurt'.
- Pupils consider behaviour to be of a high standard; they say that they are encouraged to sort out any minor falling-out themselves, although support is there if they need it. Pupils say that there is 'no bullying whatsoever, and if there was it would be sorted out straight away!' Younger pupils understand that bullying is 'doing something mean every single day' and older pupils can give good explanations of different types of bullying.
- Pupils have been taught about e-safety and cyberbullying and have an understanding of how to recognise risks while online. If they have concerns, they know to 'zip it, block it, flag it'.
- If pupils have any concerns, they are confident that adults will help them. They can also use the 'worry box' if they have minor concerns, and know these will be followed up by teachers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and conduct themselves well around the school. In lessons they behave well and there is no disruption to learning, although occasionally some pupils are inattentive if they are not sure what to do and become distracted.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average for most pupils. Strategies for reducing absence have been successful and the school has good systems in place to follow up absences and encourage good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Standards have improved at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. All groups

of pupils make good progress and most pupils reach expected levels for their age. Outcomes in writing are lower compared to reading and mathematics, particularly for the most-able pupils. The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher levels is below average in writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 1.

- The percentage of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is above average. The outcomes of the spelling, grammar and punctuation test at the end of Year 6 are also above average. This is as a result of tightly focused teaching throughout the school.
- Assessment information for pupils currently at the school, in all year groups, shows that most achieved at least expected levels by the end of last academic year and a significant proportion exceeded expectations. Evidence from books shows that fewer pupils achieve at the higher levels in writing because they do not have enough opportunity to complete longer pieces of work and practise the skills they are learning in literacy lessons.
- There is little difference between the achievement of disadvantaged and other pupils. They make good progress as a result of effective teaching and additional support. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress from their different starting points. Where pupils have lower starting points, or are at risk of falling behind, support is timely and effective and most reach expected levels for their age.
- Pupils who join the school unable to speak English fluently are given good support to improve their English. Although their progress may be slower initially, they soon make rapid progress and catch up, achieving at levels appropriate for their age.
- Pupils of different ages read well and use their basic literacy skills to work out unfamiliar words and what they mean. Pupils enjoy reading both at school and at home; older pupils understand the benefits of reading competently, both to gain knowledge and to help to develop writing skills, preparing them for their next stage in education.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge broadly typical for their age. They are welcomed into the Nursery and enjoy their early experiences, quickly becoming familiar with the routines and expectations of the school. Behaviour and relationships are good and children soon start to learn alongside older children when using the outdoor area, or on Wednesdays when the Nursery and Reception children work together. This ensures good transition to full-time education.
- Children make good progress from the time they start in the Nursery throughout early years; the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception is above average. Children's progress is tracked using an electronic system that also enables parents to contribute to assessment information held by the school. Teachers plan learning that interests the children and promotes basic skills. They are well prepared for transition to Year 1.
- The early years learning environment is well organised and equipped. There is a wide range of good-quality resources both inside and outdoors, which reflect all the areas of learning and support the children's personal development. There are many good examples of activities that support literacy and numeracy, but fewer examples of activities that support understanding of the world, for example through role play.
- Adults support children's learning effectively and a particular strength is the way language is developed; inspectors saw good-quality discussions where adults talked with children about the guinea pigs and what was growing in the vegetable beds, encouraging them to use appropriate vocabulary and talk about their learning.
- The early years provision is well led. There are clear plans for improvement that are linked to whole-school priorities. Senior leaders make regular checks on children's learning and progress.

School details

Unique reference number	135283
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10001821

This inspection 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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Jones
Headteacher	Helen Williams
Telephone number	01536 215204
Website	www.littlestanionprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@ltstanion-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. However, the roll is rising and the number of pupils joining the school, other than in the early years, is above average.
- Nursery provision is mainly part time, but there is some flexibility for full-time attendance.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average.
- 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.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education and as such has provided support in other local schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, including joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils at other times of the day, including during assembly.
- Inspectors and school leaders looked at pupils' books and assessment information to assess standards and progress over time.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including the school self-evaluation, school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body and local authority reports. They also looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, including policies and incident logs.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, school leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 53 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also met with a number of parents during the inspection and noted their comments.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Ferguson

Ofsted Inspector

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