

Lum Head Primary School

Troutbeck Road, Gatley, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 4RR

Inspection dates

5–6 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The teaching of phonics and reading does not help pupils to make good progress or attain the highest standards.
- The most able pupils do not make good progress. Teachers miss chances to deepen and extend pupils' thinking and skills.
- Leaders have not spent the pupil premium grant effectively, which has meant that disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress. The difference in attainment between this group and other pupils nationally is not diminishing quickly enough.
- There has been an enormous turnover in teachers and in governors, which has slowed the school's progress and prevented governors' ability to challenge leaders.
- There are too many vacancies in the governing body. It has not ensured that the school meets all its statutory duties regarding information on the website.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged do not have good attendance. They are more likely to be persistently absent than other groups of pupils.
- In some lessons, pupils are sometimes disengaged and lose concentration on their work.
- The early years requires improvement. The disadvantaged children are not ready for Year 1 and the most able children are not challenged enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Since April 2016 there has been significant improvement in the effectiveness and quality of leadership. The new headteacher provides very good leadership. She and the acting deputy headteacher have brought the school back from the brink of inadequacy.
- Leaders have successfully repaired the broken relationships with parents and carers. Pupils, parents and staff all appreciate the change in culture and atmosphere at the school.
- The safeguarding and protection of children are effective. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe from name-calling and how to stay safe online. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because these aspects are promoted well by all adults.
- Teaching in history and writing enables pupils to make good progress and develop good skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Teaching is particularly effective in upper key stage 2.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure the most able pupils are taught well and make at least good progress by:
 - deepening most-able pupils' thinking in different subjects and extending their skills and knowledge
 - making sure, before moving onto a new topic or idea, that most-able pupils have fully understood what has been taught
 - making sure that activities in lessons are challenging enough and pupils do not waste time waiting for the teacher, waiting for others to finish their work, or flitting from low-level activity to another low-level activity.
- Improve the teaching of phonics and reading so that:
 - teachers and pupils pronounce the sounds of the letters correctly and pupils use the letters to confidently and accurately read and spell unfamiliar words
 - pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, read more frequently with increased fluency, speed and intonation
 - pupils make at least good progress and attain higher reading standards.
- Increase the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that leaders make good use of the pupil premium grant to:
 - increase disadvantaged pupils' attendance
 - diminish the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
 - increase disadvantaged pupils' progress in different subjects, particularly those who are most able.

The school should commission a review of how the pupil premium grant is spent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The previous headteacher's decisions, were followed by a large turnover of teachers and governors. Parents complained to Ofsted. Inspectors judged their complaints to be valid and substantiated. As one parent, typical of many, commented, 'I was very unhappy with the school... I did not feel my child was making progress and the school was uninspiring. Written reports were also poor.' Many staff and parents commented on a lack of communication and broken relationships between leaders and parents. Leaders made some unwise decisions which hampered pupils' progress, for example taking away sporting and playground equipment, not allowing pupils to run outside and taking away cooking facilities. The leadership structure was unhelpful in promoting good performance management systems.
- Many different teachers taking the Year 6 class, plus unwise decisions made by leaders, led to pupils making slower progress in 2016. Some of the pupils in Year 6 who left in July 2016 underachieved. Their attainment at the end of Year 6, considering their starting points, was too low. The pupil premium grant has not been used effectively and there is no published strategy on the website for how the school spends the money. The money has not been effective in challenging the most able disadvantaged pupils to attain the higher standards.
- Leaders have not been successful in ensuring that phonics and reading are taught well, in making sure that most-able pupils are challenged and in improving pupils' attendance. It would appear that the school has declined since the previous inspection. The evidence suggests that the situation is more complicated. There was a significant decline in the quality of education to April 2016. In the last two terms, the evidence from pupils, assessment information, staff and parents suggests that there has been a transformation for the better. As one parent said, typical of many, 'With the new leadership... I have seen a complete change. The whole school community seems happier and more cohesive. Communication is much better. There are many more events and I... am absolutely delighted with the new direction of the school and the creativity and passion that has been restored under the new head.'
- The new headteacher provides very effective leadership. With the acting deputy headteacher, she has transformed relationships with early years providers, with parents and with staff. They have established a positive staff culture in which teachers are consulted and their knowledge, views and experience are valued. There are greater opportunities for teachers to work with others across the local authority. Performance management has been used harshly in the past and staff told inspectors the system caused much of the turnover of staff. It is now being used positively to bring improvements to subjects and to teaching. Leaders have already made changes to the teaching of reading and writing, which are beginning to have an impact.

- Middle leaders now have an input into the subjects they lead. They have selected subjects they are passionate about. They have identified some of the strengths in teaching and in pupils' achievement through talking with staff, looking at pupils' work, and observing teaching. There have been issues in the past where responsibilities have been blurred. The special needs coordinator and early years leaders, for example, did not have line management responsibilities over teaching assistants in their areas and did not know how well they taught. Instead this role was given to a higher-level teaching assistant who was part of the senior leadership team. The headteacher has already clarified roles and responsibilities.
- The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced although the curriculum information on the website does not meet statutory requirements. It should contain all aspects of the national curriculum and over the whole year identify precisely what is being taught in each subject to each year group. Some aspects of the curriculum are less well developed, such as cookery. As regards promotion of British values, pupils have a basic understanding of democracy, voting and elections, and there have been opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions. They understand the idea of respect for individual views and opinions. Their social development and interactions are good and pupils with whom inspectors spoke were adamant that other pupils with different racial backgrounds, appearances, intelligences and sexualities would be safe and welcomed at Lum Head. These aspects are covered in the school's curriculum.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is now spent wisely. The acting deputy headteacher audited teachers' skills and identified aspects of teachers' subject knowledge that were less than good. She employed a sport specialist so teachers could learn some of the necessary skills. Competitive sport was limited in the past because of the previous leaders' decisions. Competition has now been reinstated and pupils can now join in competitive matches.
- The curriculum is supplemented by some trips, visits and extra-curricular activities but these were limited by previous leaders as was the range of sports available in PE. The netball posts, for example, were removed. They have now been found and there is a sensible plan to have them put back with other equipment to widen pupils' sporting skills.
- There has been significant impact from the external support provided by the local authority. The school had previously not bought into the local authority's services but this decision has been reversed. The local authority's support and advice has stabilised senior leadership, the governing body and the quality of teaching. The local authority has intervened to make sure that the school did not decline any further. It fully investigated safeguarding and other complaints. It organised two experienced and knowledgeable co-chairs of governors to lead the governing body and has increased the school's capacity to improve.

Governance of the school

- Governance has been ineffective due partly to the large turnover in governors in the last few years and also to only partial information being given to the governing body. The previous headteacher, for example, did not routinely provide governors with the full unabridged set of assessment information. This limited governors' ability to measure the impact of strategies taken to improve pupils' achievement, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Out of ten governors only six are in place. Two more are due to join their first governing body meeting in October but there are still two vacancies. The headteacher has arranged a workshop to recruit two parent governors. The challenge from governors to school leaders has been limited because they previously did not have a secure enough overview of the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement because they were new in post or left before they could challenge leaders. This has been reversed. The two new co-chairs of the governing body and a long-standing parent governor are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and information about pupils' assessments. They challenge school leaders and ask pertinent and searching questions to find out why some aspects of the school's work is weaker. Governors know what needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of the governing body and have started putting it into action.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The documentation of child protection cases is thorough. Leaders make sure that they share information with other agencies but on occasion they struggle to get the information they need from health services. Some pupils have high levels of absence. These are tracked carefully. The family support worker and other staff identify the causes of low absence and have been successful in raising their attendance and making sure that the children are safe and protected.
- Leaders are vigilant and knowledgeable about safeguarding including some extreme cases such as female genital mutilation, fabricated illness and domestic violence. The policies and procedures are up to date and thorough.
- There is a good system in place to keep staff updated as to changes to safeguarding and it is a regular feature in staff meetings. There are appropriate systems in place to check on the credentials of visitors as they enter the building and check on whether volunteers, governors and staff are cleared to work with children. All teaching assistants are trained in first aid.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The teaching of phonics and reading is not good, which is one of the reasons why teaching requires improvement. There is a daily phonics session in which pupils learn to identify the sounds that letters make in words. The teachers' and the pupils' pronunciation of the sounds are not accurate or precise enough. This prevents pupils from accurately blending letters together when they read or spell unfamiliar words: for example, they say 'cha' not 'ch'.

- A second reason why teaching requires improvement is because the most able pupils are not challenged enough. This group of pupils are sometimes left waiting for new activities when they have finished their work or are given work that is too easy. Teachers also provide activities that flit from topic to topic rather than deepening most-able pupils' learning and understanding or extending their skills and knowledge.
- A third reason is because the effectiveness of teaching varies from class to class. In some classes teachers make mistakes in their spoken standard English or make mistakes in using incorrect terminology, particularly in mathematics. In contrast, in upper key stage 2 and some classes in key stage 1, teachers are skilled and knowledgeable. They motivate pupils and make them eager to learn. They use correct terminology and use questions well to deepen pupils' thinking. Some of the variability in teaching has been because teachers have been restricted by previous leaders from teaching the way they think the pupils should be taught. They were previously told to move around the classroom rather than focus on one group more intensively.
- Teaching assistants are used well and some are developing their skills further by training to be teachers. They make effective contributions to pupils' development, particularly the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use good prompts and questions to make pupils think and make sure that they do not do all of the work for pupils.
- Teaching in history and in writing is effective. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to increase pupils' knowledge and their thinking. In history, for example, in Year 6, the teacher spent time deepening pupils' understanding of the role of women in the Battle of Britain. Pupils referred to the sources in front of them when providing answers. Pupils develop a good sense of the order of events and people in history, and are given tasks which make them contrast the past and the present.
- There are many chances for pupils to use and extend their writing skills across different subjects. Grammar, punctuation and handwriting are taught well and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- In the past, pupils have been overprotected. They have not been allowed to run freely outside on the playground, climb adventure trails on the grass, or use sporting equipment in case of accidents. Since April 2016, pupils have been able to play and they have more sport equipment.
- Pupils feel safe. They said they feel safe from bullying. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe when online, for example from viruses, from unwittingly downloading spyware and from inappropriate sites and images. They also said that cyber bullying is not a problem at Lum Head.

- Pupils said that racism through derogatory comments or from being excluded from friendships is very rare and anyone from another country or race would be welcomed. They said that there is sometimes the use of 'gay' in name-calling, particularly with younger pupils, but it does not happen often. They also said that other types of name-calling because of appearance or ability is rare. Some of these incidents, however, do not appear in the school's behaviour logs.
- There have been restrictions in the past about mixing with other schools and taking part in events. This has hampered pupils' ability to learn how to contribute to wider British society. The senior leaders have already acted and have planned a range of events, trips and competitions to widen pupils' horizons.
- Pupils are articulate, confident, and take roles and responsibilities readily. They are keen to learn, particularly in upper key stage 2 where their eagerness for new knowledge and learning is very evident.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. One of the reasons is because disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are absent too frequently and their attendance has worsened since 2015. The attendance for these groups is among the lowest nationally. Some of the reasons for absence are valid and appropriate, for example for medical reasons.
- Some younger pupils mess around in class when they lose concentration in the lesson. The most able and other pupils reported that it is sometimes hard to concentrate because it is too noisy. In the playground, because some of the equipment is relatively new, some pupils are not sure how best to look after it and respect it.
- In contrast in upper key stage 2, pupils are highly focused, concentrate throughout the lesson and are rarely off-task, but this is where the teaching is motivating. Teachers use their good humour and exciting activities to keep pupils on track.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that pupils' behaviour is managed well. There are a few pupils with some behaviour needs. These are managed well by staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' ability to use phonics to read words, by the end of Year 1, is below average. They struggle to pronounce the sounds in words accurately and sometimes struggle to blend sounds together when they read unfamiliar words, particularly the lower-ability pupils. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have caught up to where they should be and most have reached the expected standard for their age. Some pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, do not read often. They are also constricted in their reading by being able to change their books only weekly. Pupils in Year 6 in 2016 did not make the progress they should in reading and their attainment was not as high as it could have been.

- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should, given their starting points. Their work shows that in mathematics they flit from topic to topic without fully extending their understanding or their skills. In one class, for example, they moved from negative numbers to a lesson on factors and then on to multiplication without spending enough time extending their understanding of negative numbers or factors in a wide range of contexts. At the end of Reception, few children have exceeded a good level of development. Some of the activities are too easy for them and they flit from simple activity to simple activity. There has been in the past a rule that the teachers cannot sit with a focus group of children, and this decision may have contributed to most-able pupils' lack of challenge.
- Disadvantaged pupils at key points throughout the school attain less well than other pupils nationally. In Year 1 phonics, at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6, the differences in attainment are not diminishing quickly. The pupil premium has not been used well enough to challenge the middle-ability pupils to become higher-attaining pupils or to challenge the most able.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been affected adversely by their absence. In addition, leaders have not had sharp enough focus on the impact of teaching by teaching assistants on the progress pupils make. In 2015 and 2016 this group did not make good progress. The new special educational needs coordinator has an improved overview of pupils' progress and is tracking it carefully. Precise teaching is now being measured to identify the impact it has on their learning.
- From the end of Reception to the end of Year 2, most pupils make at least expected progress from their starting points. They learn how to construct sentences and apply them in a wide range of contexts, and approximately a quarter of pupils in 2016 exceeded the level for their age.
- Pupils develop their writing and reading skills and apply them well in subjects such as history and science. Pupils are able to read and interpret different historical sources and write their thoughts from the evidence. In Year 5, for example, pupils wrote convincingly about some of the symptoms of the plague from a range of different sources. The school is full of well-drawn and constructed pictures and paintings indicating that standards of art are also good.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The reason why the early years requires improvement is because the most able children are not challenged enough to attain higher levels of development, skills or knowledge. Teaching of the most able children is not good because there are too many low-level activities, particularly outdoors, which children flit quickly between. The activities do not challenge children to think or to apply their English, mathematical or physical skills. The disadvantaged pupils have for a number of years lagged behind in their level of development at the end of Reception and have not been ready for Year 1. The school's spending of the pupil premium has not helped this group to make the necessary progress to catch up with other children nationally. Boys' development, particularly in reading, writing and number has been too low at the end of Reception. In 2016, boys' development was higher than in previous years.

- The early years is improving quickly. In the past, provision has been constrained by an over-rigid and ever-changing curriculum. There has been no provision for food technology because cooking facilities were removed. Children were previously not allowed to run, climb or do anything which may get them dirty, and were prevented from accessing the statutory early years curriculum which is built around exploration. The teacher was not able to teach the same topic twice and so there was no continuity of provision. Since April 2016, the leader of the early years has been free to build a curriculum that adapts quickly to children's needs and interests. There is freedom now to make good use of the space at the back of the classroom so that children can, for example, explore, paint, observe the flow of water down pipes and make mud cakes. She has a clear understanding about what needs to be improved and a good plan to make the improvements.
- Teachers have been prevented in the past from sitting with and teaching groups of children. This has now changed. Teachers and adults help individual and groups of children to make progress depending on the children's needs. They ask good questions to deepen children's thinking and they monitor children's learning well.
- In the recent past, teachers have not been allowed to visit early years providers to see the children who are due to start in Reception. They had only limited information about children at the start of the year. The early years leader has already made changes since April and has visited each of the early years providers, and established much better lines of communication with parents and with childminders. As a result, the teachers know much more about academic and pastoral needs of children as they start in Reception, and transition is smoother.
- When they enter Reception, children have the overall skills, knowledge and development that are typical for four-year-olds. They are articulate, can ask questions and can speak in different tenses. They can sit on the carpet and listen to and respond to instructions and look with interest at the books from the book boxes. They have the physical skills they need to walk, run, jump, throw, write and paint, and they are able to share, help others and manage their feelings. By the end of Reception, most children are ready for Year 1 having attained a good level of development, but there are relative weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics. In these aspects, children's attainment is not as good as in other areas of the curriculum.
- Children move around the classrooms and outdoor areas safely. They behave well and treat equipment and each other with respect. They socialise with each other regardless of gender or ethnic heritage, and learn to respect different families including same-gender parents, single-parent families and those with older parents or mixed-race parents.

School details

Unique reference number	106093
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10001041

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Skelhorn and Una Devlin
Headteacher	Gill Holmes
Telephone number	0161 428 7992
Website	www.lumhead.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@lumhead.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the school's offer in relation to special educational needs, the curriculum or the strategy for the spending of the pupil premium grant on its website.
- Lum Head is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils have a White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school met the floor standards in 2015. The floor standards are the minimum for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government. Information for 2016 has not yet been published.

- The previous headteacher resigned at the start of the summer term 2016. An interim headteacher led the school with the acting deputy headteacher for part of the week in the summer term, and the acting deputy headteacher became acting headteacher for the rest of the week. The new headteacher took up post at the start of September 2016.
- Ofsted received a number of parental complaints about the school including one that was deemed to be 'qualifying' as it involved a complaint about safeguarding. Inspectors did not investigate the complaints directly but they did look at evidence regarding the circumstances and issues surrounding the complaint.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors considered evidence relating to the parental complaints received by Ofsted including one complaint which was deemed 'qualifying' because it was of a safeguarding nature.
- They undertook observations with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher and took into account pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of the 59 responses from pupils to Ofsted's survey. In addition, inspectors met with two groups of pupils to hear them read, and talked with two other groups of pupils, as well as talking with pupils around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 38 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also met some parents and childminders at the start of the day to discuss their views of the school.
- They considered the 22 staff responses to Ofsted's survey and met a range of staff including senior leaders, teachers who lead subjects and aspects of the school's work, and the family support worker.
- Inspectors met half of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- They considered a range of documents including the school's plans for improvement, assessment information, attendance data and its own surveys.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Margot D'Arcy	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Holmes	Ofsted Inspector

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