

Locking Stumps Community Primary School

Glover Road, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 7PH

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management of the school are strong. The headteacher shows a sheer determination to provide the very best possible education for all pupils who attend the school.
- The quality of teaching across the school is consistently good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective questioning help to drive forward pupils' learning.
- Pupils benefit from an engaging and stimulating curriculum. This ensures that the vast majority of pupils make good progress during their time at Locking Stumps Primary School.
- Although narrowing quickly the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is closing more quickly at key stage 2 than it is at key stage 1.
- At present, pupils' outcomes across the school are stronger in writing than they are in reading and mathematics. On occasions, pupils are not challenged to do their very best in reading and mathematics.
- Children in early years settle quickly due to good partnership working with the on-site day-care providers. They make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils skip into school each morning with happy, smiley faces and a spring in their step.
- Standards of behaviour around the school are exemplary. Pupils are quite rightly very proud of their school. They were keen to tell the inspectors about their teachers who they describe as 'epic', 'awesome' and 'simply the best'.
- The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. Parents typically comment that they would not want their children to attend any other school because 'the ethos of the school has always been amazing'. Staff are described as 'dedicated and hardworking'.
- Governors are supportive of the school, know it well and contribute well to its continuous improvement.
- The roles of some of the leaders of subjects such as history and geography are not as well developed as those of English and mathematics.
- School leaders are well aware of what the school needs to do to improve. However, some targets in the school development plan are not measurable or sharply linked to school priorities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils in reading and mathematics, particularly at key stage 1, to ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged to do their very best.
- Continue to diminish the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally, particularly at key stage 1.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring that all targets in the school development plan are measurable and securely linked to school priorities
 - developing the role of some middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on teaching, learning and assessment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Pupils are at the heart of everything that happens at Locking Stumps Primary School. The headteacher is relentless in her pursuit of excellence and makes every effort to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential. She is ably supported by her talented deputy headteacher.
- Staff work well as a team and morale is high. Staff are proud to work at the school, feel valued and well supported.
- The school development plan outlines what the school needs to do to further improve outcomes for pupils and is well understood by all staff. However, targets are not always sharply focused on specific priorities and some are not measurable. This makes it difficult for governors and senior leaders to monitor with rigour the progress that the school is making towards achieving its goals.
- Senior leaders take immediate action to address any underperformance. For example, the recent appointment of a teacher with a specific responsibility for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the phonics screening test is having a positive impact both in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Senior leaders keep an eagle eye on the quality of teaching. Lessons are monitored through formal lesson observations, work scrutiny, planning reviews and discussions with pupils. Staff access regular training to keep their teaching skills fresh and up to date. Teachers also have the opportunity to observe best practice within the school and at other schools in the locality to help further develop their knowledge and skills.
- There is a strong emphasis on working collaboratively with other schools to support and challenge each other to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders of English and mathematics know their subjects well and closely monitor the quality of teaching and the progress that different groups of pupils are making as they move through the school. However, although passionate about their subjects, some other middle leaders do not monitor their subject areas with the same rigour.
- Careful consideration is given to ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely to break down barriers to learning. Leaders have a clear rationale for the allocation of the funds. They recognise that although the attainment gap with others nationally is diminishing, particularly at key stage 2, more work needs to be done. The funding is being used well to provide pupils with targeted support academically, emotionally and socially. Such effective practice demonstrates the school's clear commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The sports premium funding is equally well spent. An aim of the school is for all pupils to be fit and active. To encourage this, part of the funding has been used to employ a member of staff to engage pupils in physical activity at break and lunchtimes. Specialist sports coaches are also employed to deliver a varied range of sporting opportunities after school, such as tennis, rugby and football. All clubs are well attended. Pupils also take part in a range of inter-school competitive sports. Teachers work alongside specialist staff, thereby developing their own skills in delivering high-quality physical

education (PE) lessons.

- A broad and balanced curriculum has been created which appeals to pupils' interests and strongly promotes British values. Subjects are either taught discretely or through a topic-based approach. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Such good practice helps pupils recognise and understand the diversity of the world in which they live.
- The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of visitors and trips. Trips are linked to topics being studied and include visits to the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester and Tatton Park in Cheshire. A wide range of residential visits are also available for pupils to enjoy at both key stages 1 and 2. An artist also works regularly with pupils and their work is beautifully displayed throughout the school.
- The website is a valuable resource for parents. It contains a wealth of useful information, is bright, well laid out and easy to navigate.
- The local authority provides light touch support to this good school. It believes that the headteacher is an 'excellent leader'. The work that she does with other schools in Warrington, as members of The School Improvement Alliance, is valued by the local authority.
- Almost all parents are resounding in their praise of the school. Those who have children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities comment positively on the support they have received from the school and the good progress that their children are making. They believe that the school is well led and are of the opinion that 'children are flourishing at this school'.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a wide range of expertise and are ambitious for the school and its pupils.
- They are well aware of what the school does well and what improvements are needed to further improve outcomes.
- Governors regularly reflect on the data about pupils' outcomes. As a result, they have a good understanding of the progress that pupils make as they move through the school.
- They are fully aware of how the pupil premium money is being spent and its impact on pupils' progress and attainment.
- Governors offer the school and senior leaders support and challenge in equal good measure.

Safeguarding

- Staff have a good awareness of the safeguarding procedures and are appropriately trained. All staff are familiar with part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and are aware of issues around the 'Prevent' agenda.
- Those who have responsibility for safeguarding are trained at an appropriate level. Senior leaders ensure that there is always someone with responsibility for safeguarding

on the school site at all times to deal with any safeguarding concerns.

- The premises are safe and secure. The identity of visitors to the school is closely checked. The single central record contains all the required detail.
- Appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff prior to them starting work at the school.
- The school works effectively with outside agencies and parents to support pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' subject knowledge makes a strong contribution to the good progress that children are making during their time at Locking Stumps Primary School. Pupils enjoy their lessons and share warm and respectful relationships with all adults in the class.
- Lessons move at a brisk pace and no learning time is wasted. Pupils are eager to learn and their progress is well monitored.
- Teaching assistants are a valuable asset to the school. They are well deployed and work well with the teachers to move pupils' learning forward.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to probe, deepen pupils' learning and deal with any misconceptions. This was exemplified during a mathematics lesson where questioning was used well to develop pupils' understanding of the strategies being used to add two and three digit numbers.
- Overall, pupils enjoy reading and demonstrate a good understanding of its importance. Younger pupils, without prompting, make good use of their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Some pupils read with good intonation and have an awareness of book terminology. Generally, pupils have good comprehension skills. For example, when questioned about the text, pupils told the inspector that 'an earthquake will damage buildings'. Older pupils also enjoy reading and talk evaluatively about the different books and authors that they like. However, at times, the books pupils are reading lack challenge. Not many pupils make good use of the school library and the school environment is not always used to best effect to promote pupils' love of reading.
- Writing is a real strength of the school and pupils write for a variety of purposes. For example, pupils wrote a biographical account of the life of Vincent Van Gogh and of Charles Darwin. Others wrote a factual account about coral reefs stating that coral reef is found in shallow tropical seas and is made by tiny sea creatures called polyps.
- Pupils really do enjoy mathematics and get a real buzz from solving mathematical problems and developing their reasoning skills. This was clearly evident during a mathematics lesson relating to radius, diameter and circumference. However, from looking at pupils' books and observing lessons it is evident that, at times, pupils across all groups are not always given work that challenges them to think more deeply.
- The school has implemented its own marking policy. However, it is not consistently followed by staff and, on occasions, limits the progress pupils make.
- Pupils are resilient and learn from their mistakes. This was clearly evident in inspectors' discussion with pupils who typically commented that 'what we like about mathematics,

if we get something wrong we know we are learning’.

- Parents are kept well informed about their children’s progress. They are resounding in their view that the quality of teaching at this school is good and that their children make strong progress.
- Homework is appropriate to the age and development of the pupil.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly confident and thoroughly enjoy coming to school to learn. They all look very smart in their school uniform. They have a very high regard for their teachers who are positive role models.
- Pupils clearly value the importance of education and of making the most of being at school and achieving well. Many told inspectors about their hopes and ambitions to go on to further education to become doctors, vets and scientists. They talk with pride about the school motto ‘inspiring each other every day, anything is possible’.
- Pupils relish the responsibilities that the school gives them, for example as elected members of the school council. As councillors, they monitor the electricity usage in school, making sure that teachers switch off whiteboards and lights at the end of the school day. They raise money for charitable causes to help others who are facing difficulties and help others in the school to understand the importance of regular exercise to aid a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils also learn the importance of working collaboratively and as part of a team. By taking part in ‘enterprise schemes’, pupils are given the opportunities to work closely together, listen to each other’s opinions and make joint decisions.
- Pupils are very aware of online safety. They know the importance of not sharing passwords with anyone and of reporting anything suspicious immediately to an adult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- All pupils are polite and well mannered. They move around the school in an orderly manner, holding doors open for each other and saying ‘good morning’. Visitors to the school are made to feel very welcome and cannot fail to be impressed by the warm, friendly and caring atmosphere.
- Similarly high standards of behaviour were observed in lessons, at breaktimes and in the dining hall.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the differing types of bullying and the distress that it can cause. They say that bullying at Locking Stumps Primary School is rare but if it does occur teachers quickly sort it out.

- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high rates of attendance. Stringent procedures are in place to follow up any unexplained absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children enter early years with skills and knowledge below those that are typical for their age. They make good progress during their time in Reception. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is increasing each year. As a result, a greater proportion of children are ready for their transition into Year 1. In addition, the number of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development continues to rise.
- In recent years, outcomes at the end of key stage 1 had risen. However, as a result of more rigorous testing, in 2016 outcomes dipped, particularly in mathematics and reading. Progress and outcomes in writing were good with the number of pupils reaching the expected and higher standard above the national average.
- Published data at key stage 2 shows an improving picture. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards are above the national average. Particularly noteworthy was the progress pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, made in writing, which is in the top 10% nationally.
- The teaching of phonics is good. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in Year 1 is steadily rising over time and is now above the national average. The number of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard is lower, but increasing. Current school information show that the progress that disadvantaged pupils have made in the autumn term 2016 in both Years 1 and 2 is good and inspection evidence confirms that this is the case.
- The school is quite rightly proud of the progress that disadvantaged pupils are making at key stage 2, particularly in writing. Although the gaps are diminishing with others nationally at key stage 1, it is currently at a slower pace than for pupils at key stage 2.
- Inspection evidence shows that all groups of pupils currently in the school are making good progress across a range of subjects including some of the foundation subjects such as history and geography.
- The needs of the most able pupils are generally well met. For example, pupils are taught in ability groups for phonics. This ensures that teaching is pitched at the correct level to drive pupils' learning forward. However, at times, activities do not challenge this group of pupils to reach the higher standards. As a result, learning slows.
- Taking into account their very diverse needs, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong gains in their learning. This is as a result of close monitoring, swift interventions and good partnership working with outside agencies.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of early years is good. The early years leader has a good overview of strengths and priorities for development.

- The quality of teaching is strong. Staff have an accurate view of the progress that children are making and plan well for their next steps in learning. Activities are challenging and independence is well promoted.
- The environment both indoors and outside is stimulating with many opportunities for children to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Children display good levels of concentration. For example, inspectors observed children, wearing safety goggles, showing strong determination as they sawed through pieces of wood with a junior hacksaw.
- The good partnership with the two on-site day-care providers ensures that transition is effective. They have also formed a group called 'Lockies Little Learners' to enable them to work together to support children with aspects of their learning, such as speech and language.
- Children feel safe and standards of behaviour observed were impeccable.
- Positive relationships have been established with parents which helps to promote security and consistency in children's lives. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Through curriculum workshops, parents are given ideas on how to support their children's learning at home.
- At the time of the inspection there were no breaches to the welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	111204
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10024163

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Penny Haughan
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Evans
Telephone number	01925 819076
Website	www.locking-stumps.co.uk/
Email address	lockingstumps_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average as is the proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- Since the last inspection a new chair of governors has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all classes and in a range of subjects.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, members of staff, parents and pupils. The inspector also met with some members of the governing body. A telephone call was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtime, breaktime and in the classroom.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's information on pupils' outcomes and reports on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at examples of their work in books and on display.
- Account was taken of the 111 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire completed by parents. Responses to the school's most recent questionnaire to parents were also considered.

Inspection team

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