

Clehonger CofE Primary School

Gosmore Road, Clehonger, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 9SN

Inspection dates

22–23 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Instability in leadership and teaching has resulted in reduced rates of school improvement.
- Leaders and governors' plans for improvement do not fully identify the necessary priorities. As a result, governors do not yet have sufficient oversight of the school's work.
- Assessment systems are at an early stage of development and are not used fully by governors to hold leaders to account.
- There is scope for middle leaders to take on greater levels of responsibility and become more involved in evaluating the impact of teaching and devising areas for improvement.
- The overall quality of teaching varies. The best teaching in the school is not shared widely enough. The expectations of some teachers are not consistently high enough.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as for English. Pupils' ability to solve problems and learn at a greater depth has not been developed sufficiently.
- Good outcomes have not been sustained across the school. There are gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils are not making sustained rates of strong progress because some work is too easy. Teachers' planning does not offer sufficient challenge.
- Improvement plans for the early years foundation stage lack some detail and clarity. Some of the priorities identified by leaders are not included within the school's action plan.
- The learning environment in the early years foundation stage requires further development.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors have established a new leadership structure which has brought significant capacity to the school. Several skilled middle leaders have the potential to offer more expertise.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school.
- There are pockets of very strong teaching within the school.
- Staff are positive, feel valued, and are committed to securing further improvements.
- Relationships are very strong between pupils and staff. The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils and parents are happy with the school. Feedback from parents regarding the work of the head of school and executive head is very positive.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors work closely with leaders to self-evaluate the impact of the school's work and develop a clear vision for future school improvement
 - governors are provided with training to help them analyse assessment information and offer further challenge and support to leaders
 - middle leaders play a greater part in monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching
 - leaders at all levels collaborate to ensure that whole-school improvement plans are precise and reflect the exact priorities of different phases and subjects
 - work continues to address any gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and thereby outcomes for pupils by making sure that:
 - the best teaching practice is shared more widely within school and, where appropriate, with partner schools
 - assessment systems are developed further by planning more opportunities for teachers to moderate the judgements that they make about learning
 - teachers' planning more closely meets the needs of pupils and routinely offers a greater level of challenge
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of how pupils should present their learning across the curriculum.
- Improve the early years foundation stage by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders, and leaders within the early years, collaborate further to develop precise plans for improvement that reflect identified priorities
 - the development of the learning environment continues so that children, including the most able, make rapid rates of progress.
- Improve outcomes in mathematics by:
 - providing teachers with the training and support to help pupils develop their problem-solving skills and learn at a greater depth
 - making sure that teachers routinely pick up on any basic errors or misconceptions displayed by pupils.

A review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There have been significant changes to leadership in recent years. These changes have caused some instability and, coupled with changes in teaching, have resulted in lower outcomes for pupils in the last academic year.
- Leaders and governors have worked energetically to remedy weaknesses but much of their work is quite new and some aspects of development plans lack rigour. The school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is broadly accurate but is not sufficiently detailed. As a result, the school development plan is not sufficiently focused on the exact priorities of the school. This is particularly noticeable within the plans for developing leadership and management and the early years foundation stage.
- Middle leaders are beginning to be involved in the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle but their skills and abilities are underused. Some middle leaders have not worked closely enough with senior leaders to communicate the exact priorities of their areas of responsibility. Consequently, some aspects of the whole-school development plan do not reflect the important priorities identified in different phases of the school.
- The curriculum is well organised. Leaders and staff have invested time ensuring that programmes of study from the national curriculum are appropriately planned for mixed-age classes. This attention to detail ensures that work is not repeated and that pupils are able to build upon their skills progressively as they move through the school. Teachers have spent time monitoring the quality of learning across different subjects and recognise that there is scope for a greater level of challenge in some areas of the curriculum. Some activities in history and geography are too easy for pupils and lack challenge. Expectations of presentation also vary across different subjects.
- The vast majority of parents are positive about school life but some have concerns about the rate of school improvement historically and changes in teaching. Parents are, however, pleased with the establishment of a new leadership structure. Leaders are alert to feedback from parents and recognise the importance of gaining further stability in both leadership and teaching. Inspectors received many comments from parents via the free text service. Views expressed by parents included: 'Both my children absolutely love going to school. They are very happy and progressing well' and 'I am extremely satisfied with how this school looks after my child's educational needs.'
- Clehonger places great pride in its Christian ethos and core values. Staff and pupils share their enthusiasm for living out values and caring for one another. The school places emphasis on 'developing pupils as reflective learners who grow to be stable, educated and civil adults.'
- Pupil premium funding is now being used effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have devised individual plans for every child in the school who is eligible for funding. These plans accurately identify pupils' barriers to learning and are used to devise extra support to help pupils accelerate the progress that they make.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effectively used to ensure that individual needs are met. The head of school, who is

also the special educational needs leader, meets with experts in special needs from partner schools. They review the work of the school and ensure that pupils are well supported. This collaboration is proving to be highly effective but much of the work is new and not fully embedded.

- Sport premium funding is used effectively. A particular success has been the invigoration of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils now have access to a wide range of clubs and links have been established with local providers who offer expert support and coaching. Staff have also received support from a specialist teacher to develop their skills and confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Staff have been well trained to understand how these areas can be promoted and pupils demonstrate a keen understanding of what is right and wrong. British values are also well promoted through weekly assemblies and special events. For example, the school recently held a 'Great Britishness Day' and has established a school parliament. A 'Prayer Share' book, discussions with staff and pupils and the general school environment evidence a wide range of day-to-day activities where the whole community is immersed in a culture of values.
- Governors and leaders have worked with the local authority, a local partner school and a national leader of education (NLE) to broker additional support. The work of the local authority has brought about important changes to the leadership and management of the school. Leaders and governors have responded quickly to address any weaknesses and collaboration with the local high school is adding significant capacity.
- The work of the school's NLE has also been key to recent improvements. The NLE has helped leaders to identify precisely the improvements required in teaching and devise plans for the future development of mathematics. This work has had a rapid impact on standards within the school and is reversing the decline in underachievement. However, the priorities identified by the NLE have not yet been fully incorporated into whole-school improvement plans.

Governance of the school

- Governors have managed a time of change within the school and have embarked on a programme of training to ensure that they consistently meet their statutory duties.
- Governors:
 - are committed and energetic
 - use their meetings to offer challenge and support to leaders
 - visit the school regularly to gain an understanding of the school's work
 - have ensured that the school's website complies with the Department for Education's guidance on what should be published online
 - are not yet precise about the priorities for improving teaching and learning across the school
 - require further support to help them understand the school's new assessment system and thereby offer further challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The new leadership team has effectively established a culture of safeguarding within the school. Leaders engage well with parents and other agencies to keep pupils safe.
- Teachers that inspectors met with were very clear about their responsibilities and knew the exact actions that they would take if they had a concern about a child. They understand the importance of putting children first and stated that they would not be afraid to voice their views if they had concerns about any aspect of safety.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and can talk with confidence with the adults that they can go to if there is something that is worrying them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across the school. Leaders report that this variation, coupled with changes in leadership, resulted in lower levels of achievement in the last academic year. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching is improving but it is not yet consistently good.
- A wide range of strategies have been introduced to improve teaching but these are not embedded. It is clear that some teachers have specific skills and expertise. However, these strengths are not shared widely enough. As a result, teachers' expectations vary from class to class and the achievement of pupils remains uneven.
- Teachers do not always routinely pick up on basic errors made by pupils. Some common words and a range of subject specific language are misspelled in books. This lack of attention to detail is hampering rates of progress and resulting in some pupils not taking enough pride in their work.
- Teachers' planning is not routinely ensuring that pupils are provided with activities that offer sufficient challenge. Some pupils finish work quickly and say that they find learning easy.
- Though there is evidence of stronger rates of progress in English books, writing is not well promoted across the wider curriculum. For example, in history and geography some activities lack imagination and only require pupils to provide one-word answers or very short sentences. In recent weeks, it is clear that pupils are now being given opportunities to write at length and practise applying their skills in different contexts. However, these improvements are not yet fully established or sustained.
- Assessment systems have been developed to reflect the changes at a national level. Leaders are beginning to use assessment information to analyse the performance of different groups and drive improvements in teaching. However, teachers require more time to familiarise themselves with the new expectations of the national curriculum and ensure that the judgements they are making are secure.
- Staff have secure subject knowledge. This is particularly the case in the teaching of phonics, where pupils are making rapid rates of progress as a result of focused teaching.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils report that they enjoy reading and they

demonstrate very secure phonics skills. Reading diaries are used dutifully by staff and families to plot the progress that pupils make and foster a love of reading. Pupils use their phonics skills competently to read a wide range of texts. Pupils are able to describe their favourite books and why they like them so much.

- Teachers use practical resources well to support pupils in their understanding of different concepts.
- Teachers' questioning is also a strength. Inspectors observed teachers and teaching assistants using questioning to probe pupils' understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and use the school's values to help them understand how they can have good friendships and be successful learners. For example, pupils were recently given opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in an enrichment day. School records evidence how events like this involve parents and help pupils to take on responsibilities and develop their leadership skills.
- Assemblies and visits to church also help to promote values and reinforce positive learning attributes. One pupil commented, 'The school teaches us all about values to help us become a good person.'
- Pupils report that they have no concerns about bullying. They are confident that adults will deal with any concerns that they have and they feel safe in school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online and are able to recount the lessons that they have learned from special events linked to the safe use of the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school environment is calm and orderly; pupils are attentive and follow teachers' instructions quickly.
- Pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection was good. The school has worked with outside agencies and arranged additional support to ensure that any vulnerable pupils are well supported.
- The school has established a system of 'playground buddies' to support behaviour and play at social times. Older pupils are trained to look out for anyone who may not have someone to play with or who is unhappy. These pupils wear special hats so that they can be easily identified and offer any help to their peers.
- The school's own data shows that there has been a reduction in any poor behaviour since September as a result of the effective strategies that have been put in place. However, this system has not yet been developed to track all incidents, however minor, so that any trends in behaviour can be fully acted upon. For example, there is currently no tracking of any occurrences in the early years or an understanding of the frequency

with which any minor incidents may occur and why.

- Attendance is line with national averages but there is some variation between different groups. This is in part due to the very small size of some groups and the particular needs of individual pupils. Leaders track attendance carefully and take action if any concerns are identified.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Achievement in 2015 to 2016 was not as strong as in previous years due to changes in staffing at several levels. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were below those found nationally. Rates of progress were low, given pupils' different starting points, and much lower than those found nationally in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders report that achievement was uneven across the school in 2015 to 2016. Work in books shows a picture of improvement but the decline in achievement has not yet been fully reversed.
- Pupils' books show better signs of progress since September 2016 but there is some variation between different subjects. For example, work in history and geography is not of the same standard as that found in English.
- Outcomes in mathematics are not as strong as in English. Teaching is not routinely picking up on common errors in mathematics or ensuring that pupils take sufficient pride in their work.
- Children make at least typical rates of progress from their different starting points in the early years foundation stage. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is rising year on year and is currently above national levels.
- Though the proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics check dipped in 2016, the teaching of phonics is currently very strong and is bringing about rapid improvements. The promotion of reading is a key strength of the school.
- By the end of key stage 1, pupils are performing broadly in line with national levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most-able pupils are not receiving a consistent level of challenge within their work. Some pupils report that they find tasks quite easy. Activities in the wider curriculum do not always provide opportunities for pupils to write at length or extend their thinking.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those that are most able, are now making better rates of progress. This group of pupils' needs have been fully audited and appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that their needs are better met. There has been some variation in achievement for these learners in the past, though inspectors have given consideration to the specific size and context of the group. There are currently only 20 pupils on roll who are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making improved rates of progress. The difference between their overall achievement and that of other groups is diminishing over time. Teachers make accurate judgements about pupils' progress and the school has established specific actions to ensure that this group of pupils is supported both pastorally and academically.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The self-evaluation and resulting development plans for the early years are not yet rigorous or precise enough. Key areas of development, such as the learning environment, are not adequately cited in current improvement plans.
- Leaders within the Little Gems pre-school and Reception Year have not yet had the leadership training and support to help them contribute fully to whole-school improvement plans.
- Aspects of the provision, such as the indoor and outdoor environment, have been on a considerable journey of improvement. However, leaders identify that there is more work to do and that there is scope to review the environment more regularly and ensure that children receive as much challenge as possible.
- The Little Gems pre-school provides care and learning for two- to four-year olds. Staff know children exceptionally well and keep detailed records of the progress that they make over time.
- Statutory two-year checks are completed at the appropriate time and detail the milestones that children have reached. Staff provide parents with summaries of the progress that their children have made and draw out very clear 'next steps'. Parents are involved in tracking the progress that children make from the moment they join the school.
- The environment has been developed to ensure that children have access to experiences that will help them develop across all aspects of the early years curriculum. For example, children were observed practising writing their names in a literacy area. Children were using a range of resources to make marks and form letters. Two children were successfully writing their names and were keen to share their learning. Learning even extends to identifying different continents on planet earth and building rockets out of giant 3D shapes.
- Key workers have been established who champion the learning of a designated group of children. Inspectors spoke to a key worker who demonstrated exceptional understanding of every child in her care.
- Leaders within the setting take their duties to safeguard children seriously. Upon induction, new staff are required to undertake assessments to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities.
- There is space within the setting for children to rest and sleep. Leaders have ensured that appropriate ratios are in place and that statutory welfare duties are met.
- Some aspects of the learning environment within Little Gems require further development. For example, some displays do not offer the prompts or support to routinely challenge the most able. Leaders recognise that the general environment could be even more accessible and appealing.
- The learning environment in the Reception Year is more established than within the pre-school. Areas are organised with purpose and pupils readily access resources to help them learn.
- Children are highly cooperative across the foundation stage. Adults have exceptional

relationships with families and children. Parental feedback about the provision is particularly strong. One parent commented, 'My daughter benefits from a varied range of learning activities, which are always delivered with lots of fun.'

- Additional funding is used well across the provision to identify any barriers to learning and devise appropriate support. Leaders have recently arranged for staff to receive additional training to support children's early communication needs.
- The quality of teaching across the early years foundation stage is a key strength. Teaching is helping pupils to make rapid rates of progress and staff are highly skilled practitioners. As a result, children are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- There is also significant capacity in leadership in this phase of the school. The team are led by enthusiastic and energetic leaders who know their team very well. They are committed to ensuring that children make a brilliant start to their learning journey at Clehonger.

School details

Unique reference number	116795
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10025231

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Gillespie
Executive headteacher	Steven Fisher
Telephone number	01981 250218
Website	www.clehongerschool.co.uk
Email address	sfisher@clehonger.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Clehonger is smaller than most other primary schools. Year groups vary in size and some are mixed-age classes.
- Little Gems pre-school is located within the school setting and is run by governors. It provides care and learning for two- to four-year olds.
- Since September 2016, the school has been led by an executive headteacher who leads two other schools locally. A substantive head of school was also appointed in September 2016, who was previously the school's deputy headteacher.
- The school receives support from a national leader of education. This support was brokered by the local authority.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or those who are from ethnic minority groups is significantly lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made a total of eight observations of teaching, all of which were conducted jointly with school leaders.
- Learning in books was scrutinised during lesson observations and in separate meetings with leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the office manager to review the school's single central record and scrutinised a number of personnel files.
- The lead inspector met with leaders to discuss the school's self-evaluation and school development plan.
- The lead inspector met with the executive headteacher and head of school to discuss safeguarding and reviewed a range of documents, including: child protection files, training records, training certificates, risk assessments and governing body minutes.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors and vice-chair of governors.
- The lead inspector heard pupils read from Year 2.
- Inspectors had discussions with the leaders of special educational needs, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and early years.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct around the school and during social times.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate, reviewed 32 responses on Parent View and 27 responses to Ofsted's free text service.
- There were no responses to the online pupil survey or staff survey. Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the school day. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss the extent to which they enjoy learning and feel safe in school. Inspectors took account of 11 hard copies of staff questionnaires and met with a group of four staff separately.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deb Jenkins

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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