

# Stonebow Primary School Loughborough

Stonebow Close, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 4ZH

## Inspection dates

27–28 April 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards in reading and mathematics dipped considerably in 2016 and were low, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils in Year 6 made slow progress from their starting points.
- Improvements in teaching mean that pupils are making faster progress but are not yet reaching the standards they should.
- Some pupils' understanding of what they read is limited by their vocabulary. This and weaker knowledge of grammar hamper their written responses.
- Progress for some pupils, particularly those with lower starting points, is not strong in all subjects. They are not catching up rapidly enough. The progress of some disadvantaged pupils varies greatly between year groups and subjects.
- Teachers do not use their assessment of pupils' work consistently well enough to help them plan the next steps in learning, particularly for lower attainers.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have successfully tackled many of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They have also identified and responded to the factors leading to the low standards in 2016.
- Effective processes for checking on the quality of teaching and learning have ensured that improvements have taken place over a short period. Teaching is now good.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective. They use the school's assessment information well to plan further improvements.
- Rates of progress are increasing, particularly in pupils' early acquisition of reading and writing skills. Children in the Reception class get a good start to their education.
- Behaviour has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils listen carefully and work diligently in lessons. They are polite and respect the views and opinions of others. They say they feel safe and well looked after.
- A range of interesting and enjoyable activities, visits and clubs promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping them to make faster progress.
- Governors are using their skills and experience to provide support and challenge to the school. They visit the school frequently to check on progress and the governing body is more effective in holding school leaders to account.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and so improve standards, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - identify and implement strategies to support and challenge lower-attaining pupils further, including those who are disadvantaged
  - use their assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding consistently to identify the next steps in their learning
  - develop pupils' understanding and use of a wider range of vocabulary and grammatical structures in their spoken and written work
  - participate fully in sharing more widely the good practice that already exists in school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and middle leaders, has ensured considerable improvement since the previous inspection.
- Staff are very committed to improving pupils' achievement. Many of their responses to the online staff questionnaire used the word 'team', and this reflects the spirit that permeates the school. The vast majority of staff say they are proud to work at the school and agree that it is well led and managed. A typical comment from staff was, 'We believe strongly in our ethos of every child matters and every day counts.'
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved because leaders use clear processes to manage the performance of teachers and hold them to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Teachers now have higher expectations of what all pupils can achieve and are positive about the training and other opportunities they have to develop their own knowledge and skills.
- Leaders have recognised the reasons for the low standards and slow progress for Year 6 in the reading and mathematics tests in 2016. They have acted quickly to ensure that teaching is preparing pupils more effectively for the rigours of the curriculum and for the experience of taking tests.
- The school has an accurate view of its work. Leaders have carefully considered a range of information and identified the key aspects of the school that need improvement. Planning to tackle these issues is detailed and actions are checked frequently for their impact. For example, leaders know that not enough has yet been done to improve the progress of lower attainers and to improve pupils' vocabulary and comprehension.
- Middle leaders make an effective contribution to school improvement. They lead training, check on pupils' work and teachers' planning, and support teachers to improve their practice. As a result, they have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development and devise well-focused strategies to bring further improvement.
- Over the past year, senior leaders have changed the school's assessment and tracking system. The new system has enabled leaders and teachers to have a more accurate view of how well pupils are making progress throughout the school. Confidence in understanding and using the system is growing, but teachers are not yet using it consistently well to plan pupils' next steps in learning, particularly for lower attainers.
- With the support of a governor, leaders have reviewed how effectively the funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used. This renewed focus means that staff are fully aware of the needs of pupils. Monitoring by leaders shows that the funding is now having a better impact on pupils' rates of progress.
- The curriculum is well thought through and planned. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Themes, such as the Vikings and the Victorians, are delivered in interesting and motivational ways (although there were not many takers for the gruel that was on offer in Year 6). Pupils benefit from an extensive range of visits, visitors and clubs.

- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have opportunities to visit different places of worship and so develop their understanding of other faiths. The Stonebow Learning Powers – perseverance, concentration, curiosity, cooperation, resilience and enthusiasm – make an important contribution to pupils' understanding of themselves as learners and of their place in the world. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and promoting diversity. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons by teaching assistants and the funding for these pupils is used effectively. They are encouraged to be independent and to partake fully of all the school offers.
- The school uses the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively. Teachers work alongside professional coaches and so improve their own practice. The school provides a variety of sports and physical activities for pupils, including gymnastics, dodgeball, football and cross-country. Pupils say they enjoy their PE lessons and clubs.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school, with the vast majority saying their child is happy and taught well. A typical comment was, 'Stonebow nurtures enthusiastic learners who have a positive attitude to learning, school and life.'
- The school works closely with a group of local academies. These schools offer support, guidance and training to each other. This collaboration has been useful in supporting the improvements made.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors were rightly concerned about the low standards in 2016 and have kept themselves fully informed about actions and progress this year. The governing body has ensured that there are strong arrangements for managing the performance of staff.
- Governors use their skills and experience to support and challenge the school's leaders and visit the school regularly to check on progress towards the priorities. The governing body has taken external advice to improve its systems and practices.
- The governing body is fully aware of how the school is using its funding for disadvantaged pupils and keeps a close eye on the impact of the spending on pupils' attainment and progress. They also know how the funding to develop sports within the school is being used.
- Safeguarding governors have benefited from training. They are fully aware of the governing body's responsibilities when monitoring the effectiveness of the school's arrangements.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership of safeguarding is highly effective in ensuring that all staff understand and apply the school's policies and processes. Staff undertake regular training covering a wide range of issues, including extremism. Robust and rigorous systems are in place for the recruitment of new staff. As a result, there is a culture of constant vigilance in the school.
- The school works in effective partnership with other agencies. Any concerns about pupils are referred to the relevant body quickly and are followed up rigorously by leaders to ensure that the appropriate support and services are provided.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. All parents who responded during the inspection agreed that the school keeps pupils safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
- The very positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure a calm and supportive learning environment. High expectations and interesting materials ensure that pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, are fully engaged in their lessons. They talk animatedly about their learning and share ideas readily. Higher expectations among staff mean that the most able pupils are challenged more effectively, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The teaching of phonics is now good. The new approach introduced this year in the early years and key stage 1 has had a positive impact on pupils' skills and understanding. Pupils are beginning to read with greater fluency and to use their increased phonics knowledge to improve the accuracy of their spelling.
- In key stage 2, leaders and teachers are focusing on improving pupils' understanding and enjoyment of the texts that they read. They share interesting texts and books with the pupils and provide a number of ways to encourage them to read widely. Pupils say that they enjoy reading.
- Some pupils' progress in both reading and writing is hampered by their limited vocabulary and incorrect use of grammar. The school has introduced strategies to tackle these weaknesses, such as Word of the Week and a language development programme in the Reception class, but recognises that there is much more to be done.
- In mathematics, teaching is ensuring that pupils develop greater fluency in their basic number skills, while also developing their ability to solve problems and reason. The promotion of these approaches, both at school and at home, is supporting faster progress.
- The school's system of 'mild', 'spicy' and 'hot' challenges, from which pupils choose one to attempt, is not yet fully effective. The system is not yet used consistently well by all teachers and so some pupils choose challenges which are too difficult or too easy for them. This is true of lower attainers, who sometimes 'play safe' and choose the 'mild' tasks when they are capable of more. The most able pupils say that they like the

system and that they feel well challenged. This was particularly evident during lessons seen in Years 5 and 6.

- Teachers explain tasks to pupils clearly. They, and their teaching assistants, use questioning well to draw out what pupils know and understand. When misconceptions arise, they are often used as teaching points and are usually addressed quickly.
- Teachers follow the school's feedback and marking policy. Pupils understand how the system works and most say the feedback that they receive helps them to improve their work. Most pupils review and edit their work in response, but some do not and so continue making similar mistakes.
- Pupils receive regular homework which links to their learning in class. Teachers have high expectations of reading at home. Pupils say that the homework is helpful and that their parents support them with it. Most parents are happy with the information that they receive from the school and believe that their children make good progress.
- Leaders, alongside teachers, now carefully track the attainment and progress of pupils. This enables them to highlight those who need additional support to keep up or to catch up. Some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from opportunities to become familiar with the content of some of their learning before they are formally taught it. As a result, they are more confident and their progress is improving.
- Other interventions, including those for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are having a similarly positive impact. The school recognises that some lower-attaining pupils are not making rapid enough progress as tasks are not sufficiently tailored to their needs.

## 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 proud to be part of the school; they greet visitors with a cheery 'Welcome to Stonebow' at every opportunity. Older pupils take on responsibilities around the school and act as role models for the younger ones.
- The work done by staff to develop pupils' resilience in the face of challenges has had a positive effect on their attitudes and their learning. Pupils are increasingly able to reflect on how they can improve their own work. A pupil commented that teachers' feedback 'helps you learn from your mistakes'.
- Pupils say that they know who to talk to if they are worried. They know about the different forms of bullying and say that although it happens occasionally, they are confident that staff will deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and parents and staff who responded to the online surveys agree with this. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using computers and mobile devices. Through assemblies and personal, social and health education, they learn about road and fire safety and the potential dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

- Pupils have a good awareness of other faiths. They have opportunities to visit different places of worship and their learning is reflected in their discussions and in displays around the school. These high-quality displays, such as the art gallery, also highlight pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils show a good understanding of British values. When talking about the life of Rosa Parks, for example, pupils said that that everyone should be treated 'fairly and equally'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous.
- There have been considerable improvements in behaviour since the previous inspection. The headteacher has ensured that staff have consistently high expectations and manage behavioural issues well. Pupils welcome these higher expectations and there has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents.
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other and inspectors saw no incidents of disruptive behaviour. Pupils say that this is typical. On occasion, a few younger pupils find it harder to concentrate on their work because of other activities taking place nearby. Most pupils take this in their stride and manage the distractions well. Around the school, pupils conduct themselves well.
- Attendance is just above the national average. The school works effectively with outside agencies and parents to reduce the persistent absence of a few pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The school experienced significantly low standards in reading and mathematics in the assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2016, following an improvement in 2015. These were the result of a lack of adequate preparation for the tests and previous slower progress through key stage 2 and into Year 6. The results were well below the school's own assessments and internal test outcomes. Pupils' attainment and progress were broadly average in writing. Pupils also made significantly slower progress in 2014 and 2015 than the national average.
- The school's actions to tackle these issues and bring improvement to the quality of teaching since the previous inspection mean that pupils in the current Year 6, including those who are disadvantaged, are making stronger progress. The school's assessment information and pupils' workbooks indicate that standards are considerably higher in Year 6 than they were in the previous year and that pupils are better prepared for the move to secondary school.
- In other year groups, leaders' actions have also brought improvements since the previous inspection. Pupils are now making faster progress as result of better teaching. They are beginning to show that they are capable of reaching higher standards but have not yet had the time they need to fully catch up.
- The majority of children enter the Reception Year at levels of development that are typical for their age, although boys have weaker literacy and fine motor skills. The proportions of children reaching a good level of development in 2015 and 2016 were just below the national averages.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check, while improving, has been lower than the national average in recent years. In the current Year 1, pupils' reading and their responses in lessons indicate improved standards this year.
- Leaders' focus on improving pupils' reading comprehension and problem-solving skills in mathematics is beginning to ensure that more pupils make faster progress than previously. During the inspection, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, were seen to be making stronger progress in both subjects, particularly among older pupils.
- Lower-attaining pupils throughout the school have not been making fast enough progress to enable them to catch up with their peers. This includes some disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recognised this and have introduced a range of ways of providing extra support. Consequently, this group of pupils is starting to make faster progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are not making consistently good progress. Sharper targeting of pupil premium funding and improvements to teaching are helping some to make faster progress. Others are just beginning to catch up.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants that matches their specific needs. Some make very good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are making positive gains in subjects outside English and mathematics. They are developing good pronunciation in their French lessons and hold scientific discussions about which foods contribute to a healthy diet.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- There have been considerable improvements in the early years provision since the previous inspection. Leaders have a detailed understanding of children's learning because of their thorough assessments. This information is shared with staff and is used effectively to generate priorities for improvement.
- Staff are knowledgeable and experienced in tailoring the early years curriculum to appeal to the children's interests. Children's workbooks and other evidence of their learning show a broad range of learning opportunities. For example, children were enthralled by the 'rat' who had 'escaped' from his cage and was now 'lost' somewhere in the school. They knew how important it was to look for him carefully, using any clues and evidence they found. They were highly motivated to write and draw posters so that the rest of the pupils and adults in the school could also be on the lookout.
- Staff use good questioning to draw out children's understanding and ideas. They encourage children to write for a variety of purposes, building upon their increasingly strong phonics skills. When needed, children settle quickly to whole-class sessions and share their ideas confidently with their talk partner.
- Leaders have spent the pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional training for staff on developing children's speaking, reading and writing skills in the early years. This year the school's data suggests more children will reach the standards expected of them. The attainment of boys and disadvantaged pupils is considerably stronger than it



was last year. As a result, children are better prepared for Year 1.

- Leaders recognise that more children could reach the higher levels and are now increasing the range of opportunities and level of challenge needed to achieve this.
- Parents are positive about the early years provision. Leaders involve parents regularly through updates in the children's home-school communication books and through an online reporting system that enables photographs and videos of children's achievements at home and school to be shared. Events for parents give them more information about what and how their child is learning at school and how they can support learning at home.
- Safeguarding in the early years is vigilant, as it is in the rest of the school, and all statutory requirements are met. All staff receive regular training and support to enable them to keep children safe.

## School details

Unique reference number	139287
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10031144

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Tim Willson
Headteacher	Jane Fines
Telephone number	01509 646217
Website	<a href="http://www.stonebow.leics.sch.uk/">www.stonebow.leics.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stonebow.leics.sch.uk">office@stonebow.leics.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Stonebow Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in the two Reception classes.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The on-site before-school and after-school provision is privately run and registered separately with Ofsted and was not included in this inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning throughout the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team heard pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6. With the headteacher, they looked at pupils' work in their English and mathematics books in all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, and four members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of meetings, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness, its improvement plans, and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of children informally and formally and observed them at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The 73 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were considered. The inspectors took into account comments provided by parents as part of the survey.
- Inspectors also took into consideration the 32 responses to the online staff survey.

## Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Unsworth	Ofsted Inspector
Cheryl Lodge	Ofsted Inspector

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