

Longford Primary School

Ascot Drive, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1PD

Inspection dates

20–21 June 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders have not brought about enough improvement to ensure consistency in teaching. As a result, pupils' progress in key stages 1 and 2 is not yet good.
- Leaders have not ensured a clear drive and vision for the improvements needed. They have not followed up key actions with rigour to ensure that they are consistently implemented.
- Sometimes teachers do not provide work that challenges pupils enough. This slows learning, particularly for the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils.
- Too few pupils reach the level expected in phonics in Year 1.
- Teachers do not consistently give pupils clear guidance about what is expected in lessons and how to improve their work. This means that some pupils do not make good progress.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils varies from class to class, with some pupils falling behind this year.
- Leaders do not engage well enough with parents, so pupils are not fully supported in their learning.
- Too many pupils are regularly absent from school and attendance remains low. Persistent absence is higher than that seen nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get a good start in the early years. Good teaching and effective leadership ensure that all children achieve well.
- There are pockets of strong teaching. In these classes, pupils make good progress.
- Governors have a strong commitment to the school and their desire to improve outcomes is clear.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, especially science. They value the opportunity to go on trips and visits to enhance their learning.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils say they feel safe. They show maturity of thought and concern for others when acting as peer mentors.
- Pupils' conduct is good and they have positive relationships with one another. They enjoy working together.
- The school's physical education (PE) and sports provision provides high-quality activities for pupils, including a wide range of extra-curricular clubs

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further to bring about more rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are high
 - adapting tasks and providing work during lessons to challenge all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils
 - developing the quality of feedback to pupils during lessons so that all understand what they are learning and what they need to do next to be more successful
 - improving the teaching of phonics so that more pupils reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- Further improve the effectiveness of all leaders by:
 - sharpening the school development plan by setting clearer and more ambitious targets so that everyone understands the school's vision and drive for improved outcomes at all levels
 - developing the accuracy of school self-evaluation so that appropriate next steps for school improvement can be more readily identified
 - strengthening communication and relationships with parents so that they are partners in their child's learning
 - strengthening the culture of safeguarding in the school
 - raising levels of attendance and reducing persistent absence for all groups of pupils so that it is at least at national levels.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good. This is because the action to improve teaching has not yet ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have lacked the sense of urgency and rigour required to raise standards for all groups of pupils. Although appropriate areas for improvement have been identified and acted upon, a strong vision and shared purpose have been lacking.
- Self-evaluation is not accurate in all areas. Senior leaders and governors regularly review the school development plan. However, actions are not always revisited to check for quality and impact over time. Limited analysis and evaluation and a lack of understanding of what good teaching looks like are hindering school improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors are aware of the weaknesses in teaching and have begun to address these. Appropriate training and more regular monitoring have taken place. Actions taken have yet to have sufficient impact in order to raise standards for pupils in every year group.
- The local authority commissioned high-quality, regular support for the school. It has been effective in developing the skills of middle leaders, who now have a clear understanding of where further improvements need to be made. The local authority plans to continue to support the school to take more rapid, robust action in order to improve outcomes.
- The school's partnership with parents requires improvement. Some parents are unhappy about aspects of how the school is led and managed. Leaders appreciate this and know that they have more to do to engage with a larger proportion of parents. They have already looked at effective practice at an outstanding school to see what they can learn and put into action at Longford Primary School.
- Middle leaders have begun to take more responsibility for their subject areas. They have looked at pupils' books to check for progress but have not monitored classroom practice. Leadership of science presents a strong vision and a clear rationale for the changes and improvements made.
- Senior leaders and governors welcome external support received from the local authority and an outstanding teaching school. They are currently reliant on this support to drive further improvements.
- Barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils are identified and support is provided through additional funding. Relevant training has been provided for staff, enabling them to provide more appropriate guidance. However, some interventions have had limited impact and need reviewing sooner. Support such as 'reactive intervention' has recently been introduced but the impact of this is yet to be seen.
- The special educational needs coordinator uses additional funding provided for identified pupils well. She has identified the right priorities for improvement and is

beginning to address these more systematically. She is ensuring more rigorous assessments of pupils' starting points so that leaders have a better understanding of how well additional help is used to make a difference to pupils' progress.

- Leaders use the additional sports funding effectively. It is well managed, wisely spent and carefully evaluated. Pupils have been provided with opportunities to take part in a wider range of sports, including dodgeball, archery and rugby. The PE leader has high aspirations for the pupils. For example, following a visit from an Olympic gymnast, the number of pupils wanting to join the gymnastics club soared. Quality training has been provided for all staff and has improved their teaching and coaching skills. The PE leader has evaluated provision accurately and knows where further improvements need to be made.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum in place. Learning is planned through topics, with a 'fascinator' to engage pupils right from the start. Enrichment is provided through visits to places such as Warwick Castle and Cannock Chase coal mines. Pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss national and local issues with sensitivity, and to show empathy for others. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The school's values are captured in the Longford Code. Pupils clearly understand key values such as respect, manners, honesty, kindness and trust.

Governance of the school

- Governance has strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Governors' commitment to the school and desire to improve outcomes are very clear. A review of governance, which took place in March 2016, has been instrumental in this.
- The governors bring to their roles a wide set of qualities, such as professional skills and a good knowledge of the local community. The link governor role is developing well, with strong links currently established with early years and safeguarding.
- Governors think strategically and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are working more closely with staff and looking for ways to overcome barriers to school improvement. They recognise that there needs to be more rapid, sustained improvement and greater consistency across the school. They are aware of the need for additional help to support them in their role.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school meets all statutory requirements. Staff and governors receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism. Annual update training for all staff ensures that safeguarding training requirements are met. The link governor for safeguarding has appropriate and relevant skills to enable her to support and challenge the school effectively. There is a strong culture of safeguarding from key personnel such as the pastoral leader and adult in charge of nurture. All staff understand their duty of care, but some aspects of record-keeping and administration could be strengthened.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently good across the school. Although there have been some improvements in teaching since the last inspection, there are weaknesses in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Effective practice has not been developed rapidly enough and embedded in all classes.
- Expectations are not consistently high for all groups of pupils. In some lessons, the level of work set is not at the right level of difficulty. Some tasks are too easy and do not challenge pupils, especially the most able. This prevents them from further developing their skills and knowledge, thus limiting their progress.
- Teachers do not routinely adjust the lesson according to how well pupils are progressing. This results in slow progress for those who already understand a concept. Where misconceptions are not addressed, other pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- The school's agreed feedback policy is not yet consistently followed across the school. As a result, pupils do not have relevant information from teachers and are unclear about how to improve and develop their skills further.
- The teaching of phonics is improving but is not yet consistently good across key stage 1. A lack of clarity in approach and variability in staff knowledge of how to teach phonics is limiting the progress of some pupils.
- Where teachers have strong subject knowledge, questioning is effective and pupils are challenged appropriately. This is stronger in mathematics. Pupils are required to think, reason and explain. Consequently, they view themselves as mathematicians. Pupils enjoy talking about mathematics and use previous knowledge to deepen their understanding. When learning about coordinates, for example, pupils talked confidently about lines of symmetry and the properties of isosceles triangles, linking these concepts to their current work.
- Opportunities to write across the curriculum have improved since the last inspection. For instance, in science pupils are encouraged to hypothesise and record their findings; pupils say that they enjoy learning in science.
- Learning relationships are strong. Pupils enjoy working together and are keen to learn. Additional adults support pupils effectively, expecting them to be independent and to think for themselves.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The pastoral lead has had a significant impact across the school due to her tenacity in following up any issue. Provision to develop pupils' personal development and ensure their welfare has improved rapidly as a result of her leadership.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They understand different forms of bullying and are confident that bullying in any form is not a problem in the school; they see it as 'friends

falling out for a while'. Pupils can apply to be peer mentors and show maturity of thought and concern for others in these roles. Pupils believe they can sort out many problems for themselves but also trust the adults to help when necessary.

- The vast majority of pupils say they are encouraged to respect others. They can give clear examples of when the use of derogatory or discriminatory language by pupils has been challenged and stopped, with follow-up learning in the classroom. The school successfully promotes tolerance and equality.
- By Year 6 it is evident that pupils take great pride and care in their work. They are keen to learn and present their work well. They write in pen with a cursive script and annotate diagrams carefully in science and geography. This is not so well developed in other year groups.
- Nurture provision for vulnerable pupils and their families is strong and well established. Staff are highly skilled, passionate and knowledgeable. Accurate assessment of needs enables effective support to be given to pupils and their families. This, in turn, results in better progress for vulnerable pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because leaders have not been effective in reducing overall absence and persistent absence. This is despite the school putting in place a range of incentives such as certificates and prizes for good attendance. The attendance of the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller group has improved as a result of good partnership working. The impact of actions taken this academic year to improve the attendance of other pupils in the school is yet to be realised.
- Behaviour for learning is being developed but is not consistently strong in all classes or year groups. Many pupils lack the self-awareness to take responsibility for their own learning. For example several most-able pupils chose to make a 3D cube because 'it is the easiest to make and we've done it before'.
- Most pupils concentrate in lessons and cooperate well with others on learning tasks. For example, in Year 3, when building 3D shapes, pupils helped one another by holding the straws while others secured them with plasticene.
- Pupils display good manners and the majority conduct themselves well around the school. Occasionally, some pupils do not respond as quickly as they might to adults' instructions.
- The school's tracking system for behaviour is now more robust and pupils are held responsible and accountable for their behaviour. Pupils understand the red and green card system. Pupils enjoy receiving 'dojos' and parents comment favourably on the 'class dojo' system, liking the instant feedback about their child.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not consistently make the progress they are capable of and so do not achieve as well as they should by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. From starting points that are below those typical for their age, pupil progress at key stage 2 was significantly below average in 2016. Progress in reading and writing lags behind

mathematics, which was much stronger.

- Disadvantaged pupils made less progress than others nationally in reading and writing.
- Attainment for key stage 1 and key stage 2 at the end of 2016 was below national figures. Less than half of the Year 6 pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 compared with 53% nationally. The attainment of middle and high prior attainers was significantly below average.
- More pupils are reaching the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 but the overall proportion is still below the national average. Girls do significantly better than boys but this gap is narrowing by the end of Year 2, when more pupils meet the standard. Progress in phonics is improving this year but standards remain below national figures.
- Progress of current pupils is not yet consistent across the school. In Year 1, the progress made in the early years has been maintained, and more than 80% of pupils are at age-related expectations. Disadvantaged pupils outperform non-disadvantaged pupils in all areas in this year group.
- This is not the case across the school. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils have fallen behind.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make average progress, but there are inconsistencies across year groups and across subjects. Some pupils make erratic gains over time, with evidence of both accelerated and slowing progress.
- Current information shows that weaknesses remain in some groups, particularly for those who are disadvantaged in key stage 2 or for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because teachers do not have high enough expectations of every pupil.
- Assessment information is still being refined. A new tracking system has recently been put in place. Assessment is not used well enough across the school to enable teachers to know when to alter and adapt teaching in order to meet pupils' needs. Activities and work provided often do not stretch pupils to reach the expected standards for their age or attain greater depth in their learning.
- Pupils are capable of achieving more. Targets set are not high enough and lack challenge and ambition.
- Pupils' books show that progress is stronger than at the time of the last inspection, although this is not consistent across the school. The work in books and school assessment information show that more pupils are making better progress and catching up. However, the proportion of pupils making good progress varies from class to class. This results in some pupils underachieving, including the most able.
- All leaders are aware that more needs to be done to raise standards of attainment and rapidly improve rates of progress so that no pupil is left behind.

Early years provision

Good

- Senior leaders and governors have driven improvements in the early years since the last inspection and outcomes for children are now above the national average. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen from 49% in 2014 to 75% in 2016. Children grow into confident learners ready to move into Year 1.
- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. They make good progress because of high expectations and the challenging activities provided for them. Progress is stronger in the Reception classes because adults ensure that all children are engaged in learning throughout the sessions.
- Strong teaching and effective modelling enables children to master basic reading and writing skills. Children use their phonics well when writing sentences independently and know when to use capital letters, finger spaces and full stops. Boys eagerly hunted outside to make lists of tricky words and were challenged to put them into sentences. Good concentration was shown as they wrote 'the prince said he was going to move into a castle', reading their sentence out loud to each other.
- The early years leadership is knowledgeable about how young children learn. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the provision and are ambitious for its continued success. Through accurate assessment and careful observation, activities are extended or support provided. Intervention work at the time of need has resulted in good progress for those children requiring additional support.
- The curriculum takes into consideration children's interests and, as a result, they show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning. They are eager to talk about what they are learning. For example, when sharing amazing facts they had just learned about spiders, the children were excited but spoke clearly and with confidence.
- The learning environment has been carefully thought out and improved. The outdoor area is a strength of the provision. Independence is encouraged and children work well together. During this inspection, for example, a small group of children organised an egg and spoon race. There was a starter shouting 'ready steady go' and someone at the finish line to hand out medals. They took turns in the different roles and sustained interest until everyone had a medal.
- Safeguarding is effective and parents have confidence that their children are well cared for and safe. Parents are supportive and there is evidence of a strengthening partnership here.

School details

Unique reference number	124074
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10032592

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Antony Steele
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Hedar
Telephone number	01543 227410
Website	www.longford.staffs.sch.uk/
Email address	headteacher@longford.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a part-time Nursery class when they are three years old. They then move to one of the full-time Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is significantly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school received support from the Britannia Teaching School Alliance through local authority commissioning and has maintained links with it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes including the nursery. The headteacher was involved in a joint observation.
- A range of pupils' books from across the school were scrutinised. These included: English, mathematics, science, topic, intervention books and learning journals.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to discuss how they felt about the school. They also talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes on the playground and in the dining rooms. Inspectors took account of 103 responses from pupils to the online inspection survey of pupils' views.
- Inspectors heard a group of pupils read aloud and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with a group of governors and spoke to the chair of governors on the telephone. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of each day during the inspection. Inspectors took account of 40 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the school's own recent parent survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including: safeguarding records; behaviour records; attendance information; minutes of governing body meetings; governor and local authority reports; the school self evaluation document; the school development plan and pupils' assessment information.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Titchener	Ofsted Inspector

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