

# Locking Stumps Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111204
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	288891
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Crouch

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	244
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Haquani
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Littler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Glover Road Birchwood Warrington Cheshire WA3 7PH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 819076
<b>Fax number</b>	01925 838863

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized community primary school. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number with a statement of special education need. The school holds the Healthy Schools award, the Activemark award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Locking Stumps provides its pupils with an outstanding all-round education. Its success is rooted in the excellent leadership of the headteacher, senior leadership team and support provided by the governing body. Since the appointment of the headteacher in 2003 the school has succeeded in raising standards of attainment so that pupils now make outstanding progress. When children enter the Foundation Stage their skills are below levels expected for their age. Good and often outstanding teaching and support, during these early years, mean that by the end of Reception children's standards are close to national expectations. Pupils make outstanding progress through Key Stages 1 and 2, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above the national average.

The school has high aspirations for itself and its pupils. As a consequence it has been slightly modest in evaluating some aspects of its work. A highly effective system for monitoring pupils' academic progress means that teachers are able to plan lessons that set challenging targets and meet the needs of different groups well. This is a key factor in helping the vast majority of pupils to make outstanding progress. Lessons are lively and engaging with teachers using a wide range of strategies to match pupils' learning styles. Marking of work plays an important part in encouraging pupils to do their best and in praising them for their efforts and is used well to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve. Care, guidance and support are a real strength of the school. Well established links with pre-school providers and good support, including senior pupils acting as buddies, ensure that new children settle in well and soon become confident members of the school community. Pupils feel safe and secure and know that the staff have their best interests at heart. Very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they make outstanding progress. Very well established links with outside agencies make a significant contribution to the care of pupils and the support for vulnerable pupils.

The school makes good use of its grounds and buildings to create a stimulating and exciting place to learn. The well-planned deployment of the school's budget means teaching is enhanced with good resources, particularly in information and communication technology. The school achieves an excellent balance between ensuring that core skills are very well developed, for example in literacy and numeracy, and extending enjoyment and achievement. The imaginative cross-curricular teaching and creative deployment of teaching assistants and specialist teachers in subjects such as music, art and physical education contributes significantly to the standards pupils achieve.

Personal and social development is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and very well behaved. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to talk to visitors about the contributions they make to the life of the school and the excellent progress they are making. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and particularly value the wide range of extra-curricular activities. They are very aware of what they have to do to stay safe and healthy, as recognised by the national awards the school has gained. Pupils show outstanding social and moral awareness and are developing a good understanding of the beliefs and customs of people from other cultures particularly through their work in religious education, art, music and drama. Very good links with partner high schools mean that pupils are well prepared for their next phase of education. Parents say they feel part of the school community and enjoy contributing to their children's education. They say that they are made to feel welcome and that the school will always help if there is a problem.

The headteacher has a great deal of confidence in his staff and has encouraged them to develop their roles within the school. In particular, middle managers have had the opportunity to use their newly acquired leadership skills to lead groups of staff responsible for implementing aspects of the school improvement plan. A challenge they are taking on with great enthusiasm. The well-informed, hard working and self-critical governing body gives outstanding support and contributes to many aspects of the life of the school. Its strong links with senior and middle leaders and with the school council means that it has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is able to hold the school to account for the progress pupils make.

The school's approach to self-evaluation is based on the rigorous monitoring of all areas of its work. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are all able to contribute to the process and as a result the school has in place highly effective and well supported strategies for improvement and has outstanding capacity to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- The school should implement its own identified areas for continued improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the Reception class with social and communication skills below those expected for their age. Because of excellent provision in the Foundation Stage they are very well prepared for their next stage of learning. In Years 1 to 6 pupils make excellent progress building very well on their previous learning. When pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. More pupils, however, achieve the higher levels in English than in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve highly, most attaining the nationally expected levels for pupils aged 11.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school, as illustrated in their much improved attendance, which is now well above the national average. Their behaviour is exemplary, both in and out of the classrooms, and they display high levels of care and support for others. This is evident in their generous charity work and their support for pupils in a partner school in South Africa. Pupils show a real enthusiasm for learning. They show very good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles through their choice of snacks and their enthusiastic participation in sporting activities. Their good spiritual and cultural development is evident in their work in art, music and dance. The well established and very active school council is an outstanding feature of the school. This group of mature and enterprising young people play an active role in school improvement, bring visitors to the school, lead fund-raising events, and have recently organised and led a conference for pupils within the local authority. Above average levels of literacy and numeracy, confident skills in information and communication technology and participation in enterprise activities mean that pupils are extremely well prepared for their life beyond school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils in terms of standards of work and behaviour. They know them well and their detailed lesson plans take account of pupils' learning targets and the progress they have previously made. Teachers discuss their lesson objectives with the class and pupils of all abilities are given good opportunities to contribute their own ideas and assess their own work. Pupils are well informed of the progress they are making and are involved in setting their own learning targets. This good practice has contributed to the improvements in standards. Classroom display is well used to prompt learning and to celebrate good work. The outstanding provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that these pupils make better progress than their peers nationally. Provision for the most able pupils is good but, as the school has already recognised, some lessons could provide more opportunities for these pupils to reach even higher standards.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and is subject to constant review and improvement. As a result school leaders have been able to provide an inspiring and challenging curriculum, while at the same time ensuring a strong emphasis on developing the basic skills. The use of a thematic approach to teaching some parts of the curriculum has made lessons more meaningful and helps pupils make greater sense of what they learn. In addition the school's creative use of teaching assistants and visiting teachers has enriched learning and increased pupils' enjoyment of school. Many pupils participate in the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, which includes the opportunity to learn sign language and to grow, cook and eat your own vegetables! The school makes excellent use of visitors and school visits to promote learning and personal development and is currently excitedly awaiting the arrival of staff and children from its partner South African school.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The outstanding care and support provided by the school is recognised by pupils and parents alike. Pupils feel very safe and talk confidently about the way in which they are supported by the staff and other pupils: 'There is always someone there when you need them.' Child protection procedures are in place and are clearly understood by staff and pupils. The school goes to great lengths to include pupils and uses its experience of addressing individual challenges to improve its support provision. This has led, for example, to the employment of a school mentor who provides excellent support for more vulnerable pupils. Very close monitoring of pupil progress ensures that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified quickly and appropriate support is arranged, particularly from skilful teaching assistants. The school has established very good links with parents and carers. They show great confidence in the school and feel able to contribute to their child's learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body provide outstanding leadership. Their vision shows a determination to do the best for all the pupils within this very caring and supportive community and to make them aware of what they can achieve. The senior leadership team has created a very strong sense of common purpose amongst the staff, who feel well supported and fully involved in the life of the school. All leaders and managers have clear roles and responsibilities and fulfil these well. They play a major part in planning school improvement, manage their own budgets and work collaboratively to review existing practice and to raise standards. The school's leadership is fully aware of the school's strengths and of those aspects where they want to do better. Very close monitoring of the work of staff and pupils and the setting of ambitious targets have raised expectations and attainment. A well planned approach to developing the confidence and competence of teachers and teaching assistants means that the good resources of the school are very well used. The governing body knows the school very well. Its members bring a wide range of skills to the school and they play an active role in evaluating and challenging the work of the school and in promoting improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking with you and hearing all the things you like about your school. You are clearly very proud of it!

We found your school gives you an outstanding standard of education that is getting better all the time. Here are some of the things we judged are particularly good about it:

- the outstanding care everyone takes of you and how hard all the staff and governors work to do their best for you
- your excellent behaviour and how well you all get on together
- your keenness to learn and the outstanding progress you make in your lessons
- all of the extra things the staff do to make school more interesting and enjoyable for you
- the way in which all of you, and the school council in particular, contribute to the work of the school.

Finally we would like to remind you to keep working hard and trying your best, so that your school gets even better than it is now.

My very best wishes for the future.