

Longton Lane Community Primary School

Longton Lane, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 8PB

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In a short time the new senior leadership team have made a significant impact. Standards and the quality of teaching are much improved since the previous inspection.
- The school has the capacity for further improvement especially from when the executive headteacher takes up the position full-time from April 2015.
- The progress of pupils is meticulously tracked and this information is used effectively to provide additional support.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They display very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about the improvements being made.
- Pupils feel safe and incidents of bullying are rare.
- Teaching is now consistently good throughout the school.
- Teachers work effectively together to plan inspiring lessons which capture the imagination of pupils.
- In mathematics, pupils choose the most efficient methods when calculating and they enjoy using these skills to solve a wide range of challenging problems.
- Teaching assistants provide strong support both in class and when working with small groups.
- Pupils are becoming confident learners and able to work on their own for sustained periods from a young age.
- Achievement of current learners is good. Attainment is improving and pupils now make more rapid progress.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Children make rapid progress and are enthusiastic learners in this exciting environment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's marking policy is not consistently applied throughout the school and it is not always made clear to pupils what they must do to improve.
- The outstanding practice which exists in some parts of the school is not being used sufficiently to improve the practice of other teachers.
- Subject leaders have not yet started to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by six teachers. A joint observation was undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and looked extensively at pupils' exercise books.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, middle leaders, other staff, pupils and parents.
- The inspectors looked at the school's documentation to help them gain an accurate view of its performance, safeguarding policies, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour and also displays in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- They took into account the 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors also considered the 13 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Howard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to other schools nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school has experienced significant staffing issues in the past year. The headteacher has been an executive headteacher since January 2014 leading the school part-time and the new senior leadership team have been in place since September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further by:
 - consistently applying the school's marking policy and providing pupils with feedback that makes it clear how they must improve
 - sharing the outstanding practice which exists in some parts of the school, especially in early years
 - developing the role of subject leaders so that they check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has been in post for a year and in that time she has brought about a significant improvement in standards and the quality of teaching. She has quickly identified the strengths and weakness of the school and compiled a detailed plan to drive improvement forward.
- The senior leadership team, which has only been in place for one term, are already creating a culture where the highest standards of teaching, learning and behaviour are expected.
- Staff now have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and, as a result, attainment has increased, pupils are better challenged and they find lessons interesting.
- Much of the checking of teaching and learning has been undertaken by the headteacher. This has been rigorous and the feedback provided to teachers has brought about significant improvements in practice. Subject leaders have not yet taken responsibility for their subjects and established what teachers need to do to further improve.
- The Inclusion Manager has an excellent understanding of the progress made by disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils. She identifies what support is needed and how effective it is. This leadership makes effective use of the pupil premium funding and this enables all groups of pupils to achieve well and for the school to provide equality of opportunity.
- The performance of teachers is well managed. The teachers are set precise targets on what pupils are expected to achieve. There are regular meetings to check the progress pupils are making and staff talk enthusiastically about the training opportunities they are provided with to improve their practice and help pupils make more rapid progress. However, there are too few opportunities for teachers to see best practice in school and thereby improve their own performance.
- The curriculum is well planned to provide pupils with the basic skills they need for the next stage of their education. Opportunities to apply these basic skills are varied, such as writing extended pieces about a famous person from South America as part of a topic on the rainforest. During the inspection the whole school were involved in a literacy topic using the book, '*The Tin Forest*'. This not only brought the school together to share their work but enabled teachers to study the progression of writing through the school.
- The school places a great emphasis on the arts. The choir perform in the local community, pupils are taught by music specialists, and older pupils enjoyed their visit to the theatre where they took part in a workshop. The many displays around school show art work of a very high standard.
- There is a rich and varied programme of assemblies. Carefully planned themes ensure that pupils reflect upon moral issues and develop important social skills. There are many opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very strong throughout the school and helps to tackle discrimination so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding is used effectively. Pupils are receiving teaching from specialist coaches, which the teachers observe and learn from. Increasing numbers of pupils are taking part in after-school clubs and sporting competitions.
- A very small number of parents used the online questionnaire to express their concern about a wide range of issues. These concerns were not typical of the majority of respondents. Parents who spoke to the inspectors were much more positive and recognised the hard work of the new headteacher and staff in bringing about improvement. Inspection evidence would suggest that, whereas parents might previously have had cause for concern, the school is now improving rapidly.
- Parents receive a half-termly report which updates them on their child's performance as a learner and their social and personal development. This ensures that parents are kept well informed about how well their child is doing throughout the school year.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided effective support to leadership at all levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Having experienced much disruption in membership, the governing body, following an external review, are now working much more effectively.
 - Each governor is attached to a class, which they visit and experience teaching and learning first hand. Governors also look at pupils' exercise books during their meetings. As a result they are becoming well informed about how well pupils are achieving and the quality of teaching. In addition to this the headteacher also provides much detailed information.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about how teachers' performance is managed and understand how this

links with pay progression.

- The governors are well trained and they go about their work with much enthusiasm. They challenge senior leaders and are passionate about doing the best for the pupils of Longton Lane.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection the behaviour observed both in class and on the playground was exemplary. Pupils did tell the inspector, however, that there are a very small number of pupils who do occasionally disrupt learning.
- The behaviour records kept by the school show that when incidents do occur, they are recorded carefully and the action taken is timely and effective. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their behaviour.
- Pupils move sensibly around school, they show respect to adults and one another. Behaviour in the lunch hall is also good. Arrangements for playtimes and lunchtimes are checked by senior leaders and they regularly review how things can be improved.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive. They listen carefully to the teacher, develop their understanding more deeply in their discussions with their partner as well as work sensibly on their own for sustained periods.
- Pupils take a pride in the way they present much of their work, although there are a small number of examples where handwriting is untidy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils told the inspectors they feel safe and that adults 'care for us'. Incidents of bullying are rare.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to undertake responsibilities. Older pupils are playground 'friends' for younger children. This helps to ensure that playtimes are fun and adds to the warm and friendly ethos of the school.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to consider how to stay safe in different situations. Pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe when using the computer is particularly good as a result of a carefully planned whole-school topic.
- A carefully designed policy for when visitors come to school gives clear guidelines and ensures that pupils are not put at risk.
- Attendance is presently above average and is much improved from the same time last year as a result of the hard work of the welfare officer who rigorously follows up absences. Different strategies are used for encouraging and rewarding good attendance. Pupils are generally punctual.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has much improved since the previous inspection. It is now consistently good with some examples of outstanding practice in the early years and upper Key Stage 2. This has enabled current pupils to make more rapid progress and achieve well.
- The classrooms and public areas have been transformed in the past year. Pupils are very aware of the improvements being made and they feel proud of their school. Displays in the public areas celebrate the achievements of pupils and high-quality work. Inside the classrooms, displays support pupils with their learning and this has led to them being much less reliant upon adults and being able to work more on their own.
- Teachers plan exciting lessons which inspire pupils. Pupils of all abilities are well challenged. One pupil told the inspector enthusiastically that, 'There is always something more to do!'
- Teachers provide pupils with interesting activities which encourage pupils to think deeply. They frequently ask pupils to consider how they can improve the quality of their work. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 English lesson where the teacher was constantly expecting more of the pupils and encouraging them to include more complex features in their writing.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss their learning in all subjects. They are keen to share their ideas with one another and this leads to pupils becoming more confident learners. Pupils of all ages are subsequently able to work on their own for sustained periods.
- Pupils clearly enjoy reading. Since the previous inspection the school has completely reorganised the

teaching of reading and it is now much more effective. During reading lessons, pupils are engaged in a wide range of relevant and interesting activities. Teachers are now beginning to discuss the text with pupils. For example in Year 2, the teacher discussed the author's use of language in the story and this helped the pupils' awareness better.

- The English subject leader has introduced the use of texts for teaching writing, punctuation and grammar. This has been very successful. Pupils enjoy the different stories that teachers use to develop pupils' writing. They talk enthusiastically about the books. One pupil told the inspector that they, 'really enjoy this way of working' and progress is now more rapid.
- Pupils at Longton Lane are problem solvers! Mathematics is very well taught. Pupils have lots of opportunities to discuss mathematics and refine the correct use of mathematical language. There was much evidence of pupils choosing the most effective method when calculating. In Year 4 pupils worked out the perimeter of a regular pentagon by using multiplication rather than addition and this meant pupils were much faster in reaching the solution.
- Teaching assistants provide much high-quality support both in class and when teaching small groups out of class. This enables many pupils to work at the same level as their peers and reach a higher standard of work. In Year 6 the teaching assistant worked with the most able pupils. She skilfully supported them in a most challenging task and had a clear understanding of what the pupils needed to do to reach the higher levels.
- While there are many examples of effective marking, the school policy is not being applied consistently across the school. Occasionally, the feedback provided by the teacher does not make it clear enough how the pupil can improve.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is now good. The attainment of pupils currently on roll is broadly in line with national expectations and many pupils are working above this. The progress during the autumn term was rapid and this is continuing.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 screening check to assess understanding and use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is much improved from the previous year and is now similar to other schools nationally. This is a result of carefully planned interventions in Key Stage 1 ensuring pupils are supported and challenged in their spelling strategies.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of Year 2 in 2014, standards were generally similar to other schools nationally but the proportion reaching the higher levels in reading and writing was below average. Although progress in Key Stage 1 is now good it is less rapid than in Key Stage 2.
- In 2014, the proportion of Year 6 pupils making the expected progress in all subjects was generally in line with the national average. Progress is now much improved and very strong in Key Stage 2.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in reading have improved. In 2014, the proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress was above the national average.
- Progress in mathematics and writing throughout the school is good. In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below the national average. The evidence inspectors have seen in both lessons and the pupils' exercise books is that there are now more pupils working at a higher level and this is supported by the school's own predictions for 2015.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with similar pupils nationally. These pupils make good progress as a result of well-targeted intervention and high-quality support from the teaching assistants.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is three terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in English and four terms behind in mathematics. The proportions of these pupils making expected progress is similar to other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils are two terms behind other non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in English and four terms behind in mathematics. In July 2014, at the end of Key Stage 2 the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in school was closing in English but not in mathematics. The recent rapid progress of disadvantaged pupils, however, has changed this and the gap has now closed to two terms.
- In 2014, at the end of Key Stage 2 the most able pupils made expected progress in all subjects. They did not, however, reach the higher levels in writing and their attainment was lower than that of similar pupils nationally. The evidence seen during the inspection, however, shows that the most able pupils are now achieving very well in all subjects.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Most children enter the Reception Year with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. Although a large proportion of children are not as strong in their reading and writing, they quickly make rapid progress in these areas.
- The classroom is a highly stimulating and rich environment which captures the children's interests, enthusiasm and imagination. Children behave very well and are fascinated by the activities adults provide.
- Adults know the children very well and prepare extremely effectively for their learning journey. As a result children are well prepared for Year 1 with the proportion making a good level of development above the national average.
- The early years leader has only been in post a short time but it is clear that she pursues excellence and is uncompromising in the standards she sets. Adults are extremely knowledgeable and all highly focused on developing enthusiastic young learners. The adults collectively make an outstanding team supporting each other and the children highly effectively and ensuring the children's safety.
- The work with parents is very strong. At the beginning of the year, the school acquires much information about each child from the parents so an appropriate curriculum can be planned. Detailed reading logs help parents understand how well their children's reading skills are developing. Homework books show the high-quality activities that families are engaged in. Parents talk very positively about their children's start to school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104777
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	453504

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Moira Dickinson
Headteacher	Linda Speed
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2013
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