

Lea CofE Primary School

Lea, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7JY

Inspection dates 28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- With very small groups in each year group and considerable coming and going of pupils it is not easy to compare the school's performance from year to year. However, each individual pupil makes good progress from his or her starting points.
- When they first start in the Reception class many children have skills that are well below those typical for their age. However, good teaching means that, by the end of Year 6, the proportion at or above the expected levels are often above those found nationally.
- Teaching is effective because teachers have high expectations and the positive learning environment created in each classroom encourages pupils to do their best.
- Very good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs helps these pupils to make good progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils' very enthusiastic attitudes create a positive learning community where they care for and support each other well. They enjoy learning and want to do well. Pupils and their parents believe that the school is a very safe place.
- The headteacher brings a clear vision and a commitment to creating an effective school. The whole school community, including the governing body, shares her aspirations.
- A drive for improvement has seen standards rise, supported by good teaching and learning, since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching of mathematics is currently not as strong as it is in reading and writing, so some pupils are not fully reaching their potential in this subject.
- Pupils' work is not marked or assessed consistently well, so they are not always sure how much progress they are making and how they might improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over a single day and inspectors observed teaching in five lessons. Shorter visits were also made to each classroom to observe the teaching of phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make).
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were gathered from the 38 responses to the online Parent View survey, from meeting for parents and carers at the start of the school day and from a letter received from a parent.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils at lunchtime; inspectors spoke with individual pupils throughout the day to gather their views.
- Staff had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire and conversations with the inspectors took place throughout the day in order to ensure their views were heard.
- Inspectors took opportunities to look at pupils' work while they were in lessons and a made more detailed scrutiny of a sample of books from across the year groups. They looked at the quality of work and the progress being made by pupils over time. One of the inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- A range of written documentation was examined, including evidence about the progress being made by pupils, teachers' planning and marking, the schools self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Edginton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is far smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services) is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The pre-school provision situated in the school grounds has moved to a new building and its management is in the process of transferring to the school's governing body. However, at the time of the inspection this process had not been completed and so the pre-school provision did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of marking and assessment to help pupils fully understand how well they are doing and how they can improve their work by:
 - introducing more consistent ways of marking and assessing pupils' work, including advice on next steps in learning and providing time to make corrections and improvements
 - improving ways in which teachers check the progress of pupils during each term and ensuring that this is done by all teachers.
- Raise standards in mathematics to match those currently found in reading and writing by:
 - developing the confidence of staff in teaching mathematics through a programme of professional development
 - improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs through acquiring additional resources to support their progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has grown steadily in recent years but the numbers in each year group remain much lower than those usually found. In some year groups the number of pupils who join or leave the school during the year is high. For example, in 2013 three pupils left and four pupils joined Year 2, out of a total of 12, in the term before the national assessments were made. These changes meant that standards appeared to be low in that year group.
- When each individual pupil's progress is measured from their own starting points, it can be seen that of those pupils who had attended the school from the Reception year make close to or more than the progress expected nationally.
- When they first join the Reception class many children have levels of skills that are well below those typical for that age but there is a wide variation in ability. Good teaching means that they make good progress through the year and are much closer to the standards found nationally when they enter Year 1. The more-able children also do well.
- Good progress from individual starting points across a range of subjects meant that the proportions of pupils in Year 6 reaching the expected or higher levels in the national tests in 2013 were average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. They have been well-prepared for the next phase of their education, including the most-able pupils, who are being well challenged to fulfil their potential. More generally, standards in mathematics are not quite as high throughout the school because of the recent focus on developing reading and writing.
- The good quality of provision and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs mean these pupils make good progress, narrowing the attainment gap with other pupils in the majority of cases. However, there are too few specialist resources for mathematics for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, an issue the school has already identified.
- Some parents choose this school for their children because of its local reputation for effective teaching and other support for pupils with significant additional needs.
- Similarly, the care taken to allocate the pupil premium funding means that it is carefully targeted to meet identified needs. Much of it is spent on additional staffing, such as supporting the employment of a full-time special educational needs coordinator and providing additional time from specialist teaching assistants. Their skills mean that support is very good and the pupils who benefit make good progress. In Year 6, this group of pupils is now outperforming the rest in reading and writing.
- Over the last two years the Year 1 national screening in phonics (the understanding of letters and the sounds they make) has produced outcomes below those expected. However, teaching has now been revised, newly acquired phonics materials are in use there is more small-group support. Pupils are now becoming confident and fluent readers.
- The quality of sport and physical education has been improved by using the additional primary sport funding to employ specialist coaches to work with pupils and to help teachers increase their confidence and ability. Participation in sports has increased and standards have risen.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is at least good and pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. They not only achieve well but they also enjoy their learning. Some teachers are less confident in teaching mathematics and have not benefited from professional development opportunities to help them refine their skills in this subject.
- Teachers have high expectations and learning is planned carefully, reflecting a commitment to equality of opportunity for all and enabling pupils to make the best progress they can. In mixed-age classes where there is a wide range of ability teachers are good at helping all pupils to do their best and creating a positive climate for learning. This supports pupils to take a pride in their work and to be prepared to 'have a go' because they know that their views will be respected.
- Teachers ask challenging questions so they can check that pupils understand their work and to stimulate in-depth discussion that helps pupils to develop their ideas. The most-able pupils are independent and articulate learners by the time they get to the end of Year 6.
- Teaching assistants work closely alongside teachers and make positive contributions to the success of lessons, especially in supporting pupils with a range of additional needs, including those who are gifted and talented as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants also play important roles in the successful delivery of the phonics programme that is now developing better reading skills.
- Pupils' attainment is formally assessed and their progress is recorded and checked twice a year. Some teachers also keep effective records of progress during the term alongside the careful marking of pupils' work, but this is not done consistently. This means that sometimes marking does not always show pupils how to make progress towards their learning targets through identifying 'next steps' in learning. Pupils also do not always know how they might improve their work.
- Parents hold the quality of teaching in very high regard, reflected in their responses to the Parent View survey. Of those who expressed an opinion, all felt their children are well taught and making good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and in lessons no time is lost to poor behaviour. This is a positive support to effective teaching and learning, and encourages pupils to adopt a focused attitude to learning and full engagement in their work.
- They are enthusiastic learners, arriving promptly and getting straight down to work. Some of the youngest pupils do not have well-developed social and emotional skills when they first arrive but they learn to follow the good example of older pupils. Skilled behaviour management by staff also helps to develop these positive attitudes to learning. As they get older, pupils develop a pride in their school and form strong bonds with their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Around the school children show very positive attitudes to each other and to the adults they meet. They become inquisitive about the world and are keen to support the links that exist with a school in Uganda. This is just one example of the strong commitment to supporting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

- Of the parents who responded to Parent View or met one of the inspectors, all thought that good behaviour is encouraged by the school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. The pupils understand the different forms of bullying but said that in such a small, friendly and caring school it is not an issue.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good, a view also reflected by every parent who made any form of contact with inspectors. There is a very strong caring ethos in the school, reflected in the way in which the older pupils look after the younger ones. Several parents were eager to tell inspectors that they had made positive decisions to transfer their children to the school because of its caring and supportive ethos.
- The school has dealt with the high absence rate of some pupils that was identified as an issue at the last inspection and there has been a rising trend in attendance and punctuality. Currently, attendance is above average, although the attendance of some pupils who qualify for free school meals remains an issue that the school is tackling.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear vision and ambition for the school and the responses to the parent and staff questionnaires show that she has strong support in implementing this.
- The headteacher monitors teachers' classrooms and observes their practice as part of the wider process of managing the effectiveness of the school. The extensive team work and collaboration found in this very small school is a significant factor in ensuring that teaching is good.
- The process for setting teachers' annual targets for their performance is good and now relates directly to pay increases. Performance objectives relate in part to the needs and priorities that the school has identified in its self-evaluation and improvement planning but also support the professional development needs of individual staff.
- Lessons and topics are well planned and chosen, and care is taken to ensure that, in a school where pupils' show a wide variety of ability, they are all able to learn at the right level, so they are all challenged effectively.
- Safeguarding arrangements are all in place and meet requirements, including ensuring pupils are safe on trips and visits.
- There are extremely close links with parents and the school plays an important role in village life, sometimes in conjunction with the village church. Similarly, links with other professionals are also strong, especially in ensuring very effective provision for disabled pupils and those who have special education needs. Good links also support the wider social and emotional needs of some pupils, and care is taken to support them within their wider family context.
- The local authority acknowledges that this is a very good school, so does not need to provide more than limited support. Nevertheless, the headteacher feels that the positive link they have with their school improvement partner is very supportive.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a range of expertise that enables the governing body to carry out all its legal duties, including those for safeguarding. Individual governors have specific links with year and subject teachers, coming into school to discuss these and to observe classrooms. They have

also had training in using the information about pupils' progress as part of the training programme for governors provided by the local authority. This means they are in a good position to monitor what is going on in school and the standards being reached, and to compare the performance of the school with that of others. Finances are monitored effectively. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is allocated and also have a clear picture of its effectiveness in raising the attainment of those who benefit from it. A new pay policy has been introduced that is fully in line with new government requirements that link teachers' pay increases with their performance. The governing body has a good overview of the effectiveness of staff and of the procedures for dealing with any inadequate teaching. Clear objectives are set each year for the headteacher which are monitored over the course of the year.

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	116892
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	432242

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Cross
Headteacher	Linda Townsend
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
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