

Lache Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131350
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	381334
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Shirley Herring

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Mercer
Headteacher	Martin Bell
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Shirley Herring
David Halford

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed eight teachers in 19 lessons, observed support staff working with small groups of pupils outside the classroom, listened to pupils read and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and a member of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, documentation regarding the safeguarding of pupils, assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress, the analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils and the school development plan. They scrutinised 94 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils.

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to the average primary school and all classes contain one age group. Almost all pupils are from a White, British heritage and the proportion of pupils whose first language is other than English is below average. More than half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is much higher than average, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has a resource unit which caters for pupils with behaviour difficulties which serves a wider area. There is a breakfast club managed by the governing body. The school meets the current floor standards in English and mathematics; these are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

A new headteacher took up post in January 2011 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school and attainment has improved significantly over the past two years. Overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding as the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, rather than good, is not yet sufficient to accelerate achievement further.
- Pupils make good progress through the school from low starting points. Their attainment is broadly average and this represents good achievement. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage although adults in the Nursery class sometimes miss opportunities to develop children’s speaking and listening skills. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those pupils from the resource unit achieve well because of the good level of well targeted support they receive.
- Teaching is good. Agreed procedures for planning work to match the needs of different groups and for marking pupils’ work are applied consistently across the school and have helped to raise attainment. Teachers plan good opportunities to develop literacy and, more recently, numeracy skills across the curriculum but opportunities for developing pupils’ skills in information and communication technology are limited.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved and treat all members of the school community with respect. They show good attitudes and take great pride in the appearance of their work.
- Improvements in teaching and the consequent higher attainment have resulted from good performance management. The headteacher monitors and evaluates the work of the school rigorously but the role of subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning in their subject is at an early stage. The school has a firm commitment to inclusion and pupils from the resource unit are integrated very well into the life of the school. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by:
 - improving opportunities for children in the Nursery to develop their speaking and listening skills in all their activities
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum
 - developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Nursery with a range of skills that, overall, are much lower than could be expected for their age, particularly in language and communication skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but nevertheless, some children do not attain the goals expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The strong emphasis placed on developing children's personal and social skills ensures that children make particularly good progress in this important aspect. However, on occasion, staff in the Nursery fail to spot a good moment to ask a question or to encourage children to talk about what they are doing and so increase their skills in speaking and listening. Pupils make good progress through the school and this is accelerated in Year 6 because of the consistently high quality of teaching in this year group. After several years when attainment was significantly below average, improvements in teaching resulted in a rise in attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2011 to broadly average. There is strong evidence in the records of the school's rigorous assessments, the quality of work observed in lessons and in pupils' books to show that this improvement is being maintained this year. Attainment in reading is broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those pupils in the resource unit, achieve well because they receive well targeted support in lessons, in groups and individually. The gap in attainment is closing and the proportion of pupils attaining the level expected for their age is improving. All parents and carers are happy with the progress their child makes in school.

Learning is good and on occasions exceptional. Pupils respond well to high expectations and they are rightly proud of the exceptionally good presentation of work in their books. Learning is most effective when lessons move at a swift pace and pupils are suitably challenged. This was seen in a mathematics lessons in Year 6, when pupils were calculating the area and perimeter of shapes. Varied tasks were well matched to pupils' ability and they showed great enthusiasm in using well developed strategies, from counting squares to using the formulae, to solve complex problems. Learning is less effective on the few occasions when pupils are not clear about the task in hand.

Quality of teaching

Pupils, parents and carers are in agreement that teaching is good, and this is the view of the inspectors. Lessons are well planned and teachers take good account of pupils' previous

learning to plan work that provides appropriate support and challenge for all pupils. In most lessons, skilled questions provide pupils with good opportunities to explain their ideas and this reinforces their understanding. Occasionally, however, teachers do not give pupils enough time to expand their ideas fully. Throughout lessons, teachers give timely reminders to keep pupils on task and also offer 'Top Tips' to focus pupils' attention, for example, on the importance of punctuation or the correct units of measurement.

The many skills of teaching assistants are well deployed in lessons and when working with small groups or individuals outside the classroom. They make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and give clear suggestions to help them to improve. Pupils have a good understanding of their personal targets and show considerable satisfaction when they are achieved.

Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills, and more recently their numeracy skills, across the curriculum and this has helped to raise attainment. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use and develop their information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

Teachers provide good opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils routinely work together successfully in lessons and learn about other religions and cultures, for example, visiting a Hindu Temple when learning about Hinduism.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children learn well. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and this is apparent in the good range of purposeful, practical activities provided. Adults explore many ways to engage children's interest as when the Reception teacher dressed as 'Granny' to encourage children to talk about toys from the past. Children were totally engrossed and so convinced that one child was keen to know whether 'Granny' needed a 'sat-nav' to find her way home from Blackpool. Occasionally in the Nursery, adults do not ensure that children are listening when they are talking to them and so learning is less effective.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers and pupils themselves agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved in lessons and in the playground. One pupil observed that one of the many good things about the school is that everybody treats each other with respect and this was evident in the calm and friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils say that rare instances of bullying or disagreements of any kind are dealt with fairly. They concentrate well, cooperate successfully with each other in lessons and show a good attitude to their work; all factors which make a good contribution to their learning. They accept responsibilities, such as being team captains, readily and there are examples of pupils taking the initiative to make suggestions to improve the school. The school council noted that those pupils who did not like football had few opportunities to explore other sports at lunchtime. In response to their observations, the school employed a sports teacher to work with pupils at lunchtime. As a result, more pupils are actively involved at lunchtime and report that lunchtimes are more enjoyable. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe and say they feel safe and secure in school.

Attendance has been below average for some time. However, actions taken by the school, including home visits and support from the Family Support Worker, have resulted in rapid improvement in the current year.

Leadership and management

In the five terms since he took up post, the headteacher has involved all the staff in a clear vision and well focused initiatives to raise attainment. Staff training and a consistent approach to planning lessons and to marking children's work have improved the quality of teaching and helped to raise attainment. Staff and pupils are enthusiastic about initiatives to help develop pupils' writing and pupils are proud to show the improvements in their work over the year. Rigorous systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are being used effectively to identify and address any underachievement at a very early stage. Subject leaders monitor the curriculum and the work in pupils' books. However, their role in complementing the work of the headteacher in monitoring teaching and learning in lessons has not yet been developed fully. Concerted actions to reduce absences have resulted in a good improvement in attendance.

The resource unit for pupils with challenging behaviour, who come from across a wide area, is led and managed well. The school is committed to inclusion and this is evident in the way these pupils are so well supported and integrated into classes and adults show good awareness of when some pupils need a little time in a quiet area to collect their composure.

The school makes exceptional efforts, led by the Nursery teacher, to support parents and carers and encourage them to be involved in their children's education. These efforts have very recently been recognised as the school has been named as 'The Family Learning School of 2012'.

Governors are well aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding pupils and staff and the required systems and procedures are in place. They know their community well, are a regular presence and support the school well.

The curriculum is good. The introduction of a more creative curriculum has led to greater enjoyment in learning and helped to raise achievement. An improvement in planned opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects has led to a sustained improvement in the quality of writing. The school recognises the need to extend opportunities for pupils to make greater use of information and communication technology. The curriculum fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is seen in pupils' good behaviour and the way they cooperate so well with each other. Spirituality is evident when the school community comes together and the quality of singing is moving. Pupils benefit from links with a school in Uganda and they are currently saving to buy toys for the Ugandan children. The breakfast club, run by the school, provides a welcoming start to the day for pupils, including those from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school's self-evaluation has accurately identified areas for improvement and has a clear programme to address these. Concerted actions to improve teaching, raise attainment and improve attendance are having a significant impact and indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lache Primary School, Chester, CH4 8HX

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and we found your views very useful. You are extremely polite, friendly and well behaved. You are a credit to your parents and carers and your school. You clearly take a pride in your work and we were very impressed by the very careful presentation of work in your books. Well done! You clearly enjoy school and we are pleased to see that the number of you who come to school every day is increasing all the time.

We agree with you and your parents and carers that Lache is a good school. Lessons are interesting and there is always someone on hand for those who need extra help. Those of you who understand and work more quickly enjoy the challenges you are given. I saw a group in Year 4 become really excited when they had to sort out three sets in a Venn diagram. I hope you managed to solve the problem. You told us how much you enjoy the Big Write and we could see how much this has improved your writing. You make good progress and reach the standards that are usual for your age by the time you leave Year 6.

It is part of my job to suggest ways in which even a good school could be improved. I have asked that the children in the Nursery are given more help with learning to speak well, that you have more opportunities to use information and communication technology in lessons and for those staff who have leadership roles to be more involved in school management.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and try to come every day.

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Herring
Lead Inspector

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