

Holmer Lake Primary School

Brookside, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 1LD

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics in each key stage. Younger pupils make particularly good progress in reading.
- Pupils with disabilities, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium make especially good progress.
- Teaching is good and makes sure pupils know how they can improve their work further. Pupils take a pride in their work and their books are a credit to them.
- Pupils and parents are exceptionally proud to be part of the school community.
- Leaders, including governors, are relentless in their drive to keep improving teaching and pupils' achievement. They check regularly how well pupils and the whole school are doing and know exactly what they need to do to improve further.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. The school has contributed to safety awareness on a local and national level.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although improving, the rate of progress is not exceptionally high over time. The quality of teaching is not frequently outstanding.
- The outside learning area for Reception children does not support their learning as well as that inside the classroom.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes present in the school. During the inspection, 40 pupils were out of school on a residential visit. Inspectors observed 20 lessons and part lessons. Six of the lessons seen were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher and other leaders and managers, four representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The team looked at a range of documents, including the school’s own improvement plan, the school’s own evaluation of its effectiveness, the minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding arrangements.
- Together with senior leaders, the inspection team looked at pupils’ work, including that of the Year 5 and 6 pupils who, along with their teachers and support staff, were out of school on a residential visit at the time of the inspection.
- Parents and carers were asked for their views at the beginning and end of the school day and the views of 11 parents and carers who contributed to the Parent View survey were analysed. Members of staff also completed a questionnaire; their views were analysed and considered by the inspection team.

Inspection team

Simon Griffiths, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average primary school.
- There are fewer pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding for those eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed services) is well above average.
- More pupils join and leave the school throughout the school year than in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision for pupils to be educated offsite.
- The school has a breakfast and after school club run by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - enabling pupils to have more opportunity to decide how to go about their own learning
 - ensuring that leaders' checking on teaching quality always focuses sharply on how it helps pupils of all abilities with new learning by ensuring work is always demanding for all abilities.
- Improve the quality of learning for Reception children by:
 - improving the outside learning area in Reception to provide more opportunities for the children to explore and move their learning from inside the classroom to outside.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities below those normally found at that age. They make good gains in their speaking, writing and number skills. They learn how to work together, share and take turns. Children are also able to work by themselves and concentrate for long periods of time. Opportunities for imaginative play are better inside the classroom than in the outside area, which limits children's learning.
- Pupils move into Key Stage 1 with the skills they need to learn well. They make good progress in all aspects of their work, particularly reading. They learn how to link sounds and letters and break down more difficult words in their reading. At the end of Key Stage 1 they have reached the levels expected of pupils of that age and, in reading, exceed them. This shows they have made good progress.
- Results at the end of Key Stage 2 over recent years show that pupils leave the school with broadly average levels of attainment and, in 2012, their attainment was above average. There was a slight dip in English in 2011, but standards in 2012 were higher than those in 2010. This shows that, over time, standards are improving and are, currently, above average.
- Over time, progress at Key Stage 2 is above that generally expected nationally. In 2012, progress was much better than this in mathematics. School tracking of pupils' achievement and progress shows that most pupils are, currently, making good progress and some pupils are doing even better than this. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Work in pupils' books is of a good and often better standard. Pupils take a pride in their work and their books are a credit to both them and their teachers. The levels of attainment assigned by the teachers in judging the quality of pupils' work are accurate.
- Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about it. They understand its importance in helping them write and spell well for themselves. Many enjoy taking part in an online competition about reading.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress and many do better than this. They grow in confidence and all aim to do their best.
- The pupils who attract the pupil premium funding achieve well. For example, the latest data show that the gap in attainment between Year 6 pupils eligible for free school meals and others in the school narrows considerably, when measured in average point scores attained in English. There is no difference in the attainment of these two groups in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is focused successfully on basic skills. Pupils are taught the skills of writing and expected to be able to sit and concentrate on their work – as they do. There are good opportunities for them to use resources and learn for themselves, for example in the bear's house where children enjoy using their imagination. Opportunities for them to do so outside the classroom are limited because the quality of resources is not as good as it needs to be for them to make even more rapid progress.
- Good use is made of technology in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils choose to use

computers by themselves while other groups work with tablet computers to help them with letters and sounds.

- Across the school, teaching typically gives a brisk pace to learning, and questioning is sharp. Work is carefully planned to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are well briefed and no time is wasted as pupils move into groups to do their work. Teachers are good at checking learning, correcting misunderstandings and celebrating good work.
- In some lessons, pupils do not learn quickly because the work planned does not fully challenge all abilities. In these lessons, work is not always demanding enough for all pupils, some of whom are not sure what they should learn next.
- Learning purposes in lessons are explained carefully by teachers and pupils are well supported by adults. As a result, they achieve well but, sometimes, opportunities for pupils to make choices and plan their own learning activities are more limited.
- Work in the pupils' books shows that, over time, teaching is good. Teachers take care to mark the books carefully and give the pupils guidance on what it is they need to do next to improve their work. Pupils say how helpful this is. They are expected to respond to the marking and their books show that they do.
- The progress of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is closely checked each half term and teaching and learning adjusted if needed. Teachers, additional adults and leaders know the pupils well and ensure they are always challenged by the learning presented to them at their own level.
- A strong feature of the teaching is the small-group activities provided for the pupils. These focus on basic skills, such as reading, and help any pupils who need to catch up. Such activities help pupils to practise their skills across all subjects. One session involved pupils crocheting brooches made from plastic. Good use was made of technology with a specially prepared video to help the pupils advance their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are courteous around the school. They are confident to talk to visitors and are proud of their school. They mix happily at playtimes and lunchtimes and the dining hall is a calm place where pupils can both eat and talk together happily.
- They engage fully in lessons and are keen to join in group conversations, work with a partner and also individual work. These excellent learning habits start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the children are taught to work in a calm and quiet atmosphere.
- Pupils are confident and keen to answer questions in lessons. They are prepared to give longer answers to show their understanding. For example, younger pupils happily share facts about the Victorians and compare life then with that of today.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are highly aware of different forms of bullying. They say there is very little of it, and are active themselves in keeping it that way. For example, they have rewritten the bullying policy themselves. Exceptionally, pupils have been involved in both local and national projects about keeping safe.
- Pupils clearly understand the school rules and what will happen if they are broken. Teachers

manage any challenging behaviour well and are strongly supported by leaders.

- Attendance has risen, and most pupils attend regularly. Children enjoy attending the Breakfast club which provides a range of activities and is a calm start to the school day.
- The school actively teaches pupils to be properly ambitious and they understand that success at school is important for them to succeed in life.
- Pupils are proud to be part of this school. This attitude has been fostered over time by the headteacher, for example, through the 'Proud' song and also the 'Golden Moments of Pride Book', where parents write why they are proud of their child. This approach has a strong impact on pupils' behaviour and their determined approach to work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader, who is ably supported by her deputy. The headteacher and governors have a very accurate picture of the school's achievements. They compare the school to the highest levels attained nationally and are actively taking steps for the school to become outstanding. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Pupils' progress is tracked systematically to ensure prompt extra support for individuals when necessary. The progress of groups is also checked regularly to help plan the subject content that pupils will learn.
- Parents say they are well informed about the progress their children are making. They think the school is well led and they are confident to come into school should they need to.
- Subject leaders in all subjects check the quality of teaching and work in their subjects. They are well supported by link governors. Leaders are clear in their expectations of pupils. For example, pupils are expected to read every day at home and also manage a demanding amount of homework.
- Leadership ensures that all groups of pupils, including those with disabilities, special educational needs and those attracting the pupil premium, make good progress and, sometimes, even faster progress than other pupils. This is because the expectations of all pupils are equally high. Extra funding for those pupils attracting the pupil premium has been carefully allocated and its effectiveness closely checked.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted in all aspects of school life. For example, in assembly, a visitor from the local church encouraged pupils to reflect on their own personal qualities, as they did well, and the headteacher brought in her own collection of bears to bring real meaning to the topic and capture pupils' interest and thought.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for the school because it recognises that the school's leadership has much capacity to improve it further.
- Safeguarding and recruiting checks meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their evaluation of the school's performance is robust and accurate. They are rightly proud of the improvements made over the last few years. They understand the data on pupils' progress and attainment that come into the school and use the information to both identify areas to improve and also to celebrate improvements made. They ensure that teachers' pay is justified by pupils' performance and that the pupil premium is spent effectively on those pupils it is intended for. They each work alongside subject leaders with shared action plans to develop those subjects. They have ensured that statutory requirements are met and that the school is financially sound.

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	123429
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	406163

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	239
Appropriate authority	Telford and Wrekin
Chair	Deva Odedra
Headteacher	Sian Deane
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
Telephone number	01952 387580
Fax number	01952 387581
Email address	Sian.deane@taw.org.uk

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