

# Longwood Primary School

Allton Avenue, Mile Oak, Tamworth, B78 3NH

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although attainment has been average at the end of Year 2, Year 6 results fell sharply in 2013 and were well below average.
- Achievement slowed after the last inspection because of staffing weaknesses and changes. Some groups, particularly Key Stage 2, have struggled to make up all the lost ground.
- Over time pupils have not made sufficiently rapid progress especially at Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do not make consistently good progress.
- Teachers new to the school have not had time to develop a clear sense of what pupils are capable of. Consequently, their expectations of pupils and the level of challenge they offer them are not always high enough.
- The role of the leaders of the year group teams in improving teaching and learning has not been fully developed.
- The school has yet to take full advantage of the benefits available to it from its membership of the Tame Learning Trust.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governing body have brought a clear vision for improvement to the school and have laid the foundations for moving it forward.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good.
- Better provision is now in place to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, which is helping these pupils to make better progress from often very low starting points.
- Behaviour has improved since the new behaviour policy was introduced and pupils are very positive about this. A large majority of pupils enjoy school and pupils say they feel safe.
- The school is working hard to increase its involvement with parents in a variety of ways so that they can help their children in doing their very best.

## Information about this inspection

- Each of the class teachers was observed teaching their class, comprising a total of seven lesson observations, of which five were joint observations with school leaders. The work contained in some pupils' books was looked at in detail and a group of pupils read to the inspector.
- Meetings were held with senior and year group leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff with specific roles, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a representative of the local authority and pupils.
- A total of 51 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were taken into account in gaining the views of parents and carers.
- In addition to the meeting with representative pupils, the views and opinions of pupils were sought through conversations held during lessons and throughout the inspection.
- The views of staff were gained from their staff questionnaires and from conversations throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation that included information on pupils' progress and achievement, and the ways in which it is tracked through the school, teachers' assessment and planning, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and a range of policies, including those concerned with safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who qualify for the pupil premium (additional government funding available for certain pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are in the care of the local authority) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing. The acting headteacher at that time was subsequently appointed to the post full-time in early 2012.
- A pre-school provision on the school site for three and four year olds is run by the governing body; no child attending this facility is on the school's roll.
- On 31 August 2013, after consulting parents, the school joined the existing Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust and became a foundation school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better and the progress and achievement of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, is accelerated by ensuring that:
  - the information the school holds as to pupils' progress is used effectively so that all lessons contain a range of well-planned activities that meet the needs of all pupils and take into account the challenging targets set for them
  - in reading, pupils receive consistently clear guidance to help them tackle new words and texts confidently
  - in mathematics, pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise their number and other mathematical skills so that they become more confident in their use and are able to apply them to real-life problems.
- Enable year group leaders to be more effective by:
  - refining their skills in observing teaching, analysing pupil achievement data and assessing learning in classrooms, so that they can more effectively advise senior leaders on the key priorities for improvement for the school
  - formalising their role in the observation of their colleagues in their classrooms
  - giving them opportunities to model best practice to colleagues.
- Make the most of the benefits from joining the cooperative learning trust by:
  - making good use of opportunities offered by this partnership to support the professional development of staff and therefore improve teaching
  - encouraging teachers to work closely together, and with colleagues in the other schools, to confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments of the quality of pupils' work across all the schools participating in the trust.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In most years attainment at the end of Year 2 has been average. It was average in Year 6 in 2012. In 2013, attainment in the Year 6 national tests fell sharply, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils left the school around a year behind pupils nationally. This was because these pupils were not able to catch up on previously lost ground from years when they made much slower progress than they should. The evidence from pupils' work and the school's data shows that the current Key Stage 2 pupils, and others throughout the school are in line to attain much better results, close to national averages.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is inconsistent and requires improvement. Two years ago this group made good progress in both English and mathematics, and outperformed other pupils in the school. However, last year they made less progress and there was a gap of over a year on average between them and their classmates in English and mathematics. This is linked partly to the weaker teaching previously. Current monitoring shows that eligible pupils are currently making stronger progress.
- Pupils start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because provision is effective, but their skills are still a little below expectations by the time they join Year 1.
- Reading is now promoted strongly from the moment children first start at the school, and pupils are increasingly able to use phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) to help develop their skills. In the 2013 national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1, the pupils were slightly above the national average. Not all pupils in the older classes, however, are given enough help in using their knowledge of phonics to confidently tackle new words and more demanding texts.
- Information on achievement collected by the school shows most pupils currently in the school are now making steady, and occasionally better, progress in English and mathematics as well as in other subjects. This is particularly so in Reception and in Key Stage 1 because teaching has been stronger here over time. However, although opportunities are provided in other subjects for pupils to apply their reading and writing skills, this is less the case for mathematics. This means their progress in applying numeracy skills is less strong than it could be.
- Improved tracking and analysing of the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is helping to improve progress for these pupils because the work is better targeted to their needs.
- Provision for more-able pupils has improved because they now have enhanced opportunities, such as those provided through the school joining the learning trust. This allows pupils from all the schools to get together to work on more challenging work and, as a result, the progress of these pupils is now accelerating.
- The new national funding for enhanced fitness and participation in sports in primary schools is being used effectively. A sports coach is working with the school, not only to develop the pupils' skills but also to work with staff to equip them to sustain this work into the future.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- There has been a significant period of instability in teaching since the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 2, in particular, have experienced periods of weak teaching that set them back and especially took its toll on the progress and attainment of pupils in Year 6 last year. Firm action has been taken to eradicate inadequate teaching. There is now a much higher proportion of good teaching, but not enough for pupils to make consistently good progress. Teaching is not yet consistently sharply focused enough on every pupil's needs and targets to ensure that all pupils make up lost ground as fast as they need to.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' achievement are accurate and are increasingly are being used purposefully to pitch work at the right level. In particular, teachers new to the school do not all yet set their expectations high enough of what pupils can achieve. This means that, sometimes, the work they set does not challenge pupils enough.
- The best teaching does challenge pupils by asking probing questions that make pupils think hard. Here, the level of challenge is high and pupils respond positively, enjoying their lessons and learning. In these lessons, teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to try to ensure that all pupils benefit, including the more able and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The different activities provided meet the needs of pupils with often very different abilities effectively.
- Teaching has moved to a more topic-based approach, which not only covers a wide range of subjects but also encourages pupils to apply their developing grasp of English, mathematics and computer skills in other subjects. Pupils in Year 4 illustrated this well during a lesson on the Ice Ages, their current topic. Pupils showed good English skills in note-taking while watching short film clips about the extinction of the woolly mammoth. This change in approach has brought about clear gains in pupils' motivation and increased engagement in their learning.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour has improved since the introduction of the relatively new behaviour policy, which was approved by the governing body shortly after the arrival of the current headteacher. Pupils like the 'rewards and sanctions' approach, which has helped them to become much more responsible and mature.
- Behaviour in lessons is good because pupils now enjoy their lessons, especially the range of interesting things they are doing as part of their topic-based learning. This is important in helping pupils to improve their performance, and they are starting to see their positive attitudes bringing rewards in terms of faster progress.
- Behaviour during breaks and lunchtime is good. There is a good range of play equipment provided which encourages positive play and collaboration amongst the pupils. There are always a good number of adults on duty to supervise and encourage.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They appreciate the dangers of the misuse of the internet and social networking sites. Pupils show a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including that based on prejudice and cyber-bullying.
- While some parents feel that behaviour is not always good, this is not reflected in the evidence collected during the inspection. Similarly, although a minority of parents are concerned by what they see as bullying, pupils themselves insist that it is not a problem. The school is working with parents, for example through workshops and pamphlets that teachers have produced, to help

them understand the nature of bullying.

- Attendance has improved and is closer to the national average. This has come about because the school has worked with parents to ensure that they send their children to school. The main issue remaining is that of absence caused by families taking holidays during the school term and the school is working to address this.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership is not yet good because, despite the new momentum that the headteacher has brought to the school, teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are not yet good and some pupils still have ground to make up as a result.
- The role of teachers who act as the year group team leaders in leading improvements in teaching and learning is not fully developed. There are too few opportunities for these leaders to use their expertise to support teachers through observing lessons, modelling of good practice, or by leading training sessions. This means that some improvements in teaching are not happening as quickly as they could do, such as ensuring that all teachers make full use of the information they have about how well pupils are doing in order to ensure that every pupil is consistently challenged in lessons.
- The curriculum engages pupils in learning because they enjoy the increasingly topic-based approach in lessons. This also has the effect of promoting good behaviour and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is keen to benefit from the advantages to be gained from its membership of the learning trust. Leaders have plans to use the trust to extend the training opportunities available to staff and governors, and to secure more rigorous checks on the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. All staff are united in their support for the changes and improvements that are emerging and are looking forward to working with a range of new colleagues in these areas. These opportunities are, however, yet to be fully realised.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and expects to benefit from working alongside other headteachers within the learning trust. On taking up her post nearly two years ago, she immediately realised that teaching needed to be improved if achievement was to rise. She has been successful in tackling the previously inadequate teaching. Although many of the staff team are new, the quality of teaching has improved.
- Increasingly effective processes are being used to improve the performance of teachers. For example, the headteacher carries out regular monitoring of teaching and checks teachers' planning and marking. All staff have annual objectives which are aimed partly at addressing whole-school needs and partly at supporting individual professional development. Teachers understand the links between their performance and pay, and those on the upper pay scale willingly accept additional roles.
- The improvements in teaching, attendance and behaviour demonstrate the school's capacity for improvement. Leaders and governors understand its strengths and areas for development and use this knowledge to identify areas for improvement. These are currently focused on addressing the legacy of underachievement.
- Arrangements to ensure pupils are safe are carefully managed and meet statutory requirements.

- The school is working hard to develop positive links with parents, through the provision of various workshops, for example, as well as with a variety of external professionals who support learning or who work with families facing difficulty.
  
- The local authority has provided good support, which has reduced over time as it feels that improvement is now underway. Its officers currently visit twice a term and it is funding curriculum development work within the school.
  
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The effectiveness of the governing body has much improved since the last inspection, in part through the recruitment of new governors who have the skills needed to drive school improvement. They have received training in the use of data and now hold the school to account for its performance. They have gained an understanding of what goes on in classrooms through the termly governor days, when they observe lessons and link with individual teachers. Finance is monitored carefully by well-informed governors who have the relevant expertise to do this accurately, and there is a good understanding not only of how funding such as the pupil premium and the sports funding is used but also of its impact. Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and carefully oversee the arrangements for monitoring the performance of teachers. They have established arrangements to link teachers' salary progression to the progress of their pupils, and have helped to ensure that any inadequate teaching has been dealt with.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124104
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426993

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	147
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Orton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01827 475030
<b>Fax number</b>	01827 475030
<b>Email address</b>	office@longwood.staffs.sch.uk

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