

Long Knowle Primary School

Blackwood Avenue, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 1EB

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' achievement is not good. It is better in English than in mathematics.
- Writing and mathematics skills do not develop quickly because pupils do not get much practise in using their skills in other subjects.
- Teaching requires improvement because the middle attaining pupils are not given enough demanding work to ensure that they reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Marking does not give pupils guidance on how to improve in some subjects.
- Teachers do not teach consistently well and this makes an adverse impact on pupils' enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. As a result, behaviour requires improvement.
- Leaders' and managers' checks on the quality of teaching have not been rigorous. Consequently, teaching has not improved since the previous inspection.
- Some teachers responsible for subjects are at the early stages of developing their leadership skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's work to ensure disadvantaged pupils catch up is successfully closing the gaps previously evident.
- Good, secure, warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to be courteous with each other and with the adults in school.
- Teaching assistants help pupils learn and make progress, especially pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers to deal with any problems.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons and a sports-funded session and made several shorter visits to lessons. Four of the lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors spoke formally with one group of pupils and informally with others during work and play.
- The inspectors visited an assembly, listened to pupils read and discussed the work they have been doing in class.
- The inspectors reviewed pupils' work with the headteacher.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of information that included: records of pupils' achievement, governing body meetings, and attendance and behaviour; the school's own evaluation of its work; and information on the setting of targets for teachers.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for an analysis to be made, but inspectors spoke informally with parents as they waited for an 'Inspire' session. These are sessions throughout the school in mathematics and English for parents to learn in the class alongside their children.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Brown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-size primary school and most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Fewer than average pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for particular groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and looked after children is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special needs supported through school action is average and the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special needs is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school is a member of 'Learning Community 8', a group of local schools that share training and activities.
- There have been considerable changes of staffing and senior management since the previous inspection, with a high level of staff absence in the last nine months.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring activities are challenging and make all the pupils think hard
 - improving marking so that it always gives pupils guidance on how to improve and reach their targets
 - marking pupils writing, in all subjects, in the same way it is marked in literacy lessons, so that pupils can see the links and learn at a faster rate
 - ensuring teaching develops pupils' sustained enthusiasm and eagerness to learn in lessons.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and English by giving pupils practice in using their skills in different subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders of subjects other than mathematics and English develop their skills and expertise in the monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning, and that this leads to improvements in pupils' achievement
 - making sure that the data gathered about pupils' progress is used more effectively in providing a detailed view of achievement over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The majority of pupils, including middle-attaining pupils and the small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, do not make good progress. Progress from Year 1 to Year 6, in particular, requires improvement.
- From starting points that are below those typically found, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills that are broadly average. Pupils leave Year 6 with broadly average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From current work seen, standards are rising across Key Stage 1 and the progress pupils are making is improving. The school's current data show that attainment is rising in Key Stage 2 as well. More pupils are on track to achieve well. However, improvement in rates of progress is not consistent across all year groups or subjects. It is stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics, and it is faster in Years 5 and 6 than in younger age groups.
- In the Nursery, consistently good teaching enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning, giving them a good start to school. They play together happily and are well behaved. They enjoy exploring for themselves, as well as doing adult-led activities, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved because teaching is systematic and effective. In the Year 1 phonics checks in 2012 and 2013, the pupils reached the expected standard.
- Many pupils write confidently and read well, and can use mathematical skills. However, progress is held back because they do not get to practice their skills regularly in other subject areas.
- Standards in physical education are improving thanks to effective use of the new primary school sport funding. Sports coaches lead lessons and provide training for the staff.
- The use of pupil premium funding to create smaller teaching groups and increase one-to-one support is having a positive impact on the progress made by eligible pupils. The 2013 results show that the Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were less than a term behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. Current information shows that the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is narrowing further.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making similar progress and in some cases better than their classmates, especially those supported at school action plus. These pupils show great benefit from the 'Cool Kids' programme. This is a set of physical exercises which help the pupils relax and helps them be ready for their lessons.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good or better across the school. Although action by the school is securing improvement, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent. An increasing proportion of the teaching is good, but not all weaknesses have been addressed and these are still holding back the consistency of progress.

- Teaching is stronger in English than mathematics because, more often, activities enthuse pupils and make them think hard, maintaining their interest. Teaching is not as good in mathematics because teachers do not use all the information available on pupils' ability to help pupils learn more, especially the middle attaining pupils.
- In the most successful teaching, pupils' interest is captivated. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, after discussing 'the Naughty Elf who put shoe polish on the window', pupils were thoroughly engrossed in producing a 'wanted poster' to capture the elf. This resulted in good quality writing where pupils used some exciting descriptive words such as 'obnoxious' and 'disgusting' to adorn their posters.
- Teachers plan a wide range of experiences for children in the Nursery. They make the most of every opportunity to help them learn. In the sand play with pebble letters and cars, the children made good gains in their speaking and listening, talking about what they were doing.
- Teachers' questions are sometimes good and this helps them assess how well the pupils understand the work. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used effective questioning, and the individual pupil's improvement target to help pupils understand how to write exciting and interesting diary entries. Occasionally, questions are limited and require only one-word answers, and this restricts pupils' thinking and therefore, their progress.
- Teachers' written marking in English and mathematics is more effective in helping pupils make progress, than in other subjects. This leads to common mistakes being left uncorrected in topic work that would be corrected in specific literacy work, especially in writing and spelling.
- In every class, there are warm relationships between pupils and staff. Teaching assistants are well directed and skilled at asking questions, especially when they are working with individuals or small groups. This provides good classroom support, especially for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and it allows these pupils to play a full part in lessons, promoting equality of opportunity.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. It is not good because there is too much variation in pupils' responses in class. In some lessons, pupils' attention wanders and they become bored especially if they have to wait too long for their teacher to give them more work when they have finished their tasks. In other lessons, pupils pay close attention to their teacher and a mention of their name is enough to regain their focus if they are distracted.
- Pupils behave well when lessons captivate their interest. They show confidence and put forward their ideas and pose questions.
- Pupils look forward to coming to school and as a result are punctual to school and lessons. Pupils and parents who were spoken to during the inspection say that behaviour is good. Pupils are courteous to each other and the adults.
- Around the school, including in the breakfast club, there are many examples of good behaviour and of pupils' sensitivity to the needs of others. At break and lunchtimes, pupils socialise well.
- The school's management of behaviour and positive use of praise and encouragement and special events promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example the school is having a special dinner for the Chinese New Year.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils in the discussion group and around the school said that they feel very safe in school. They have confidence in the school behaviour systems. They are very much aware of the different forms of bullying, for example ignoring somebody or name-calling but they say it is rare. They say that if anything happened they would go to a member of staff and the adult would do something about it. They have very good understanding of cyber-bullying and know how to be safe out of school.
- The school has worked hard to raise attendance, which was below average in 2013. Attendance since September is in line with the national average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Staffing and subject leadership have undergone change since the start of the current school year. Subject leaders' roles, other than the literacy leader, who is the deputy headteacher, are therefore not well-developed. They check teachers' planning but have not carried out sufficient observations of teaching to enable them to accurately evaluate its effectiveness. They do not fully analyse information about how well pupils are doing in order to choose the right issues to improve.
- The headteacher carries out checks on the performance of teachers and makes appropriate decisions about salaries, based on pupils' achievement, and progress of individuals and groups. Subject leaders' targets are clearly focused on pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- The school development plan is produced from the school self-evaluation and shows clear vision for the continued improvement of the school based upon accurate evaluation of data which identifies appropriate priorities. Leaders' view of what the school does well is generally accurate. However, targets set for pupils' attainment and progress are not high enough to help pupils to make good progress.

The school provides an interesting and well-balanced range of subjects on a two year rolling programme, which is now beginning to involve pupils in choosing some of the topics they study. Use of the new primary sport funding has enabled the school to continue to engage an outside group to help train staff and give pupils expert tuition in physical education, games and gymnastics. This is also shared throughout the school cluster, 'Learning Community 8', enhancing pupils' perceptions of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Plans are detailed to measure the impact on pupils' physical wellbeing.

- The progress of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is monitored well by the school. There is a marked improvement on the previous year, when they were nearly twelve months behind.
- Parents spoken to say that the school keeps them well informed about their child's progress. They have the confidence to approach staff and share concerns. The 'Inspire' sessions have resulted in more parents coming in to school and feeling able to take a greater part in their child's learning. Most parents would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority has provided useful support for the school. It has undertaken monitoring visits to review teaching and learning and has provided the school with secure advice. Governors value the challenge and external view brought by the School Improvement Officer's monitoring visits.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have recently become more effective in supporting the headteacher in the school's ambitious drive to become good. They are beginning to hold the headteacher to account for the performance of pupils. They now have a much clearer idea of where stronger and weaker teaching exists and what the headteacher is doing to tackle weaknesses.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's context, how pupils' achievement compares with other schools, the quality of teaching, and of the safety of children. They are fully involved in the decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to support eligible pupils and know what the impact of the funding is. They focus sharply on whether gaps are closing for different groups when they make decisions about using pupil premium funding or about teachers' salary increases. They are fully involved in managing the headteacher's performance, drawing on advice as necessary, and have a clear overview of the management of staff performance.
- Committees effectively carry out statutory responsibilities and they have ensured that procedures for safeguarding meet national requirements.

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	104320
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	431165

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Corbett
Headteacher	Martyn Bidgood
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2012
Telephone number	01902 558985
Fax number	01902 558986
Email address	office@longknowle-pri.lppplus.net

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