

Acresfield Community Primary School

Acres Lane, Upton By Chester, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 1LJ

Inspection dates	30 September–1 October 2014
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Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1	
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1	
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1	
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1	
Early years provision	Outstanding	1	

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by staff and governors, has successfully driven the school forward since the last inspection.
- Teaching is outstanding and has improved since the last inspection. The strong expectations of the staff are evident in the high standards of work and levels of achievement reached by pupils.
- Pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work or are set additional challenges in literacy and mathematics. This high quality feedback is not always evident in other subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are confident learners who are encouraged to think for themselves and explain their understanding, learning very effectively from one another.
- Governors are highly effective and fully involved in all aspects of the school's work showing excellent knowledge of the school and able to hold it to account thoroughly.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are well cared for. They take an active role in developing each other's understanding of how to keep safe.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement has risen with more pupils gaining the highest levels at both Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics than found nationally.
- Pupils throughout the school, including those who have special educational needs, those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, those who are disadvantaged and those who start at different times, achieve exceptionally well from their different starting points.
- The curriculum is enriched with first-hand experiences and is planned successfully to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. They also looked at pupils' work.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from three different year groups reading, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the school improvement consultant.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management, including the school's arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- The inspectors spoke to parents, took account of the 40 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and other communication from parents. They also took account of the 18 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alastair Younger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Acresfield Community Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there have been some staff changes, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs who have moderate learning difficulties and complex learning needs. Eight pupils currently attend this provision.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school part way through their education is higher than average. Some of these pupils are children of armed forces personnel who have to move as part of their professional commitments.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for its pupils which formed part of the inspection.
- The headteacher provides support for other schools and the special educational needs coordinator provides support within the cluster of other schools with which the school works.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the guidance pupils receive on how to improve their work across all subjects matches that of the high quality evident in literacy and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. He has very high aspirations and has led a relentless drive to secure the highest levels of achievement since the last inspection. As a result, there have been marked improvements in attendance, the standards reached by pupils and the quality of teaching.
 - The staff and governing body are fully committed to this vision. Staff feel highly valued and well supported and consequently, staff morale is extremely high. Staff typically comment on how they work closely together to achieve success.
 - Senior leaders are meticulous in their checking on the achievement of all pupils. The detailed tracking of different groups ensures that any pupils in danger of not reaching their potential are quickly identified. Regular pupil progress meetings with the headteacher and special educational needs coordinator ensure that additional support and actions are matched closely to pupils' needs, including those pupils who are part of the resourced provision.
 - Performance management is robust and the headteacher sets high expectations of teacher performance which is explicit in the challenging targets which they are set. Pay progression is only recommended when these have been achieved. Professional development is planned and carefully mapped to the needs of individual teachers and the development needs of the school.
 - The headteacher knows the school extremely well. Development plans are accurately focused on the key priorities and are shared fully with staff and governors. Regular and focused checking on the quality of teaching by all staff and leaders, including middle leaders, through lesson observations, book scrutinies and shared moderation of work has a very positive impact on improving pupils' progress. The effective middle leaders make full use of this information when deciding what is needed to improve the subjects they lead.
 - The curriculum is rich and includes many first-hand experiences, such as the trips to an airport and a farm. The introduction of the new curriculum has taken full account of the skills and knowledge pupils need to learn. Pupils have also contributed their ideas to the planning of this with the result that the themes chosen are based around pupils' interests.
 - The primary school sport funding is used very effectively. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sports that pupils can join in with as well as specialist coaches working with pupils and staff on planning and teaching effective lessons. This has led to significantly increased levels of participation in different sports.
 - The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education has been carefully planned to identify and incorporate opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and their role in society. The use of residential visits and a half termly focus on a different value contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The local authority provides 'light touch' support for the school, including training when appropriate. The school employs a school improvement consultant to support it with its work. The headteacher and special educational needs coordinator provide other schools both in and beyond the local network with additional support and guidance.
 - Relationships with parents are highly positive and parents are highly supportive of the work of the school. Parents of some children who have started the school at different times to usual were very positive about the way in which their children had settled so quickly and confidently.
- The governance of the school:**
- The governing body provides excellent support and challenge to the school. It is very well informed about the quality of teaching and has an excellent understanding of the information which is collected about pupils' progress. Governors take on specific roles and through regular meetings with staff, involvement in checking on the quality of teaching by visiting lessons and looking at books, know the school very well. This knowledge is followed up with detailed reports and evaluations. Governors look closely at how teachers' performance is linked to pay progression, including that of the headteacher.
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of how the different funding, such as sports funding and pupil premium funding, is allocated and the positive impact of this spending. Governors also work alongside pupils to develop the grounds and raise e-safety awareness. They ensure that their statutory duties are fulfilled, including those relating to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In lessons, pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning and are eager to learn and do their best. They are often engrossed in what they are doing; sharing their ideas with one another and supporting each other's learning. This is evident in their high levels of attendance.
- Pupils show courtesy and respect for one another and adults. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around school and all pupils fully understand the expectations of them. In the 'Busy Bees' resourced provision the pupils showed excellent manners when being served their snacks while taking a 'trip' on an aeroplane.
- Pupils behave to the same high standard at playtimes and lunchtimes with outside areas fully used. Older pupils take on responsibilities such as playground leaders and as buddies to younger children.
- Pupils have a very positive start to the day in the 'Fledglings' breakfast club where pupils of all ages mix happily with one another and enjoy the activities on offer to them. The same high expectation of behaviour is evident during these sessions.
- Pupils across the school are involved in the 'better playtime team', which includes staff and governors. Together they have made planned improvements to the outside spaces and have also carefully considered the health and safety implications of the new equipment.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Some pupils, through their membership of the e-safety team, have a central role to play in developing other pupils' understanding of the potential dangers of using technologies. They have worked with both governors and a local artist to develop their top tips and produce a permanent display in school.
- Pupils show a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that it very rarely happens. They are confident that any such incidents would be swiftly sorted out by the adults who care for them. Any pupils who have any worries are able to write these down and 'post' them in Wanda the pig-shaped post box. A group of pupils and a member of staff regularly review these and take any necessary action.
- All staff and parents who responded to Parent View, spoke to inspectors and sent additional communications are highly supportive of school and agree that pupils are safe, happy and well behaved there.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Overall the quality of teaching across the school is outstanding. Pupils' work shows that they are challenged and consistently work at levels above those typical for their age. As a result, they attain standards which are well above average by the time they leave.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils and their work is matched closely to pupils' different abilities so that they all make rapid and sustained progress. In Year 5, pupils were investigating whether statements related to the properties of shapes were true. They worked highly effectively together explaining and discussing their hypotheses, showing a high level of understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Adults use questioning highly effectively to get pupils to think and explain their understanding. This was seen to excellent effect in Year 2 with pupils explaining how to work systematically through a mathematical problem of how many ways the character in their literacy book could decorate her wellies.
- It is always made clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and checks are made as they learn to ensure all are clear about their tasks. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers assess pupils' understanding and then plan work to build successfully upon this so that learning moves forward quickly.
- The use of time to read and respond to marking is used consistently across school in literacy and numeracy. This means that pupils take on board teachers' comments and are provided with frequent opportunities to improve their work, make corrections or complete additional challenges. Marking and guidance in other subjects is not always of the same high quality.
- The contribution of teaching assistants and other adults to learning is excellent. Additional support is carefully matched to pupils' needs because of close checking on how well they are doing. Pupils explain how they get extra support when they find something more difficult but also when they need something harder. Any misconception is recorded by teachers and additional support swiftly provided so that pupils learning can continue to move along at a rapid rate, particularly in mathematics.
- Reading and writing are taught very successfully. Phonics (letters and their sounds) is taught very effectively. In Year 2, pupils used their knowledge to excellent effect to identify how an -ed ending can

sound differently. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes, such as the recent leaflets supporting a charity event they had organised, which lead to high quality writing. Pupils are encouraged to talk through their ideas before writing them down which supports and improves the organisation.

- Inspection evidence shows that teaching of mathematics is most effective. The school has a strong focus on developing pupils' abilities to think critically and to solve problems in mathematics. They regularly apply their learning to solve problems and to explain their methods when using calculations.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From starting points which are broadly typical pupils attain levels which are well above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school. The rate of progress across all classes is rapid and sustained.
- In the 2014 national tests (unvalidated) all pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant proportion made more than expected progress, higher than that found nationally. These rates of progress, which are high compared to national figures, have been maintained over the past three years, and are evidence of the long-term impact of outstanding teaching.
- Progress across Key Stage 1 is now outstanding. As a result, attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has continued to improve since the last inspection and the majority of pupils reach the level expected for their age and a significant proportion reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The results of the national phonics check for pupils in Year 1 are much higher than the national average and have improved each year. Pupils develop an enjoyment for reading at a very early age and teachers often use a literacy focus for their thematic work. As a result, pupils' writing is frequently lively, using correctly a wide range of vocabulary and punctuation.
- Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with expression and confidence and clearly explain their reasons for selecting a book. One child noting that 'you can't always 'judge a book by its cover' used the synopsis to make an informed decision on choice of book.
- The school has many highly skilled mathematicians who thrive on solving problems. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels by the end of Year 6 has been significantly above national for the last two years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are extremely well supported. The use of assessment data to carefully check on their needs combined with the specific support they receive both in class and small groups ensures that they make very good progress from their different starting points.
- The pupils in the resourced provision make excellent progress from their different starting points because their specific needs are very well catered for. Real-life experiences are used to promote their speaking and listening skills as well as their mathematical understanding.
- Pupils who arrive in the school at times other than the normal admission times and the small number for whom English is an additional language are carefully checked and any additional needs quickly identified. The school assessment data show that these pupils make progress which is of a similar high level to their peers.
- The most able pupils make very rapid progress because they are challenged well and consistently exceed the levels expected for their age. Pupils say that they are given hard work which makes them think they are sometimes 'taken out' for harder work, particularly in mathematics, which they enjoy.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils ensuring that they make similar progress to other pupils. There were too few pupils at the end of Year 6 to make a judgement on the attainment of pupils known to be disadvantaged compared to other pupils. The attainment of pupils across school who are eligible for this funding is similar to other pupils nationally and within school in reading, writing and mathematics. They make similar rapid rates of progress as others in the school. This shows the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Children settle in to the early years setting quickly because routines are quickly established. Adults have exemplary expectations of behaviour and learning. High levels of engagement, independence and cooperation are evident. A group of children worked together to create an obstacle course around a track, making careful decisions on where to place things and whether it would be safe or not.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge which are broadly typical for their age although this is not the case for all pupils, particularly in language. Last year a sixth of the class had specific additional needs and started with skills much lower than expected. Children make high rates of progress from their different starting points, including those who have additional needs and those who are more able. By the time they start Year 1 the vast majority of children are working at least at the expected level for their age with a significant proportion of children with skills which exceed this. They are prepared well for Key Stage 1.
- The excellent arrangements in place before children start school contribute very effectively to them settling quickly. Home visits and visits to other settings ensure that staff know the children and their parents well and they plan for their particular needs. Parents contribute to children's learning journey books called 'Tiger Trails', providing evidence of any important learning moments outside school.
- Teaching is excellent and staff constantly observe and record their assessments of children's learning electronically across a range of activities. This is used to very effectively inform their short-term planning and to identify both challenge and support to allow children to move forward quickly in their learning, including their physical and emotional needs.
- In a phonics session children showed enthusiasm in learning new sounds and actions as well as remembering those they had previously learnt. By the end of the previous year school evidence shows that children were confidently producing high quality writing, including some interesting adjectives.
- Leadership is outstanding with a clear overview of how to improve. Careful checking on progress and teaching leads to meticulous planning. This ensures the environment is stimulating, safe and organised well. Children access a range of different activities both indoors and outside which promote the different areas of learning, including their physical and emotional development. Excellent attention is given to children's well-being. The use of first-hand experiences to provide stimulus for activities is planned successfully and positively supports their developing spiritual and cultural awareness.

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	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.
		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.

School details

Unique reference number	111205
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	448405

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Antony Mylchreest
Headteacher	Mike Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2010
Telephone number	01244 981020
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@acresfield.cheshire.sch.uk

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