

Pebble Brook Primary School

Balmoral Avenue, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 6PL

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, the school's effectiveness has improved and is now good.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and direction. She is strongly supported by the deputy headteachers and governors.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. Their evaluation is based firmly on rigorous and detailed monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result of decisive action to improve teaching and learning, pupils' achievement has improved rapidly since the last inspection and improvement continues.
- From below and sometimes significantly below typical starting points, children's learning gets off to a good start. Good teaching, along with excellent relationships with adults and an exciting environment, promotes their interest and encourages them to learn.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6, standards in reading and writing are broadly average and in mathematics they are above average.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is consistently good; some is outstanding. Teaching is carefully tailored to meet the varying needs of pupils. All groups of pupils make good progress overall.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning and enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is average. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel totally safe in school.
- Good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables them to thrive in a very supportive learning community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always given the precise guidance they need to improve their work, particularly their writing, the accuracy of their spelling and the quality of their handwriting. Pupils are not yet fully involved in deciding next steps in their own learning.
- Pupils at the early stages of learning English are not always given the support they need to understand key language and vocabulary when they learn alongside their peers as a whole class.
- Some middle leaders are new to the school and are still at the early stages of developing their roles, including in improving teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and made short visits to other activities, such as guided reading, phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) lessons and small group and one-to-one support led by teachers and trained assistants. Two of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also visited the provision for learning outdoors, and the breakfast club.
- Two groups of pupils met formally with inspectors and inspectors talked informally to a wide range of pupils. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. Meetings were conducted with the members of the governing body and with a group of parents. Inspectors also held a discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work with the headteacher and deputy headteachers and read a range of documents. These included documents about the school's strategies to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pebble Brook Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average and rising across the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is lower than average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes in staff; several new teachers have joined the school. The headteacher and one deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2013 and a second deputy headteacher took up his post in September 2014.
- The early years provision consists of two Reception classes.
- The school operates a breakfast club each morning which is run by the family support lead in conjunction with sports coaches.
- The Brooks Children's Centre is adjacent to the school. It is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that it is consistently outstanding across the school, thereby accelerating pupils' rates of progress and raising standards by:
 - making sure pupils are always given the precise guidance they need to improve their work, especially their writing and the accuracy of their handwriting and spelling
 - involving pupils in deciding next steps in their own learning
 - making sure pupils at the early stages of learning English are given the support they need to understand key language and vocabulary when they learn alongside their peers as a whole class.
- Further develop the role of middle leaders and increase their impact on improving teaching and learning so that the senior leadership team can focus on increasing the school's capacity for continued improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team has an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. This evaluation is based upon rigorous and regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Since their appointments, the headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, have acted swiftly and decisively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Regular and rigorous monitoring effectively hold teachers to account, identify training needs. Leaders provide teachers with appropriate support. As a result of very clear direction provided by the senior leadership team, achievement and teaching have improved significantly over the last year across the school and the school continues to improve.
- Pupil premium funding is used to good effect to support disadvantaged pupils. This contributes well to the good progress these pupils make. Similarly, the primary school sports funding is used to good effect to improve the quality of teaching in physical education across the school and to enrich pupils' experience in extra-curricular activities, including the breakfast club. This has led to increased participation in extra-curricular and sports activities across the school and great enthusiasm for these activities among pupils of all ages.
- Middle leaders, some of which are new to their roles, are not yet fully involved in the school's self-evaluation processes, school improvement planning and leading improvement in teaching and learning in their subjects. This means the responsibility for driving improvement forward relies too much on the senior leadership team.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets pupils' needs and aspirations well and prepares them well for citizenship in modern Britain. It enables them to practise their mathematical, reading and writing skills in a variety of contexts while allowing them to develop their expertise as historians, scientists and geographers. The curriculum is enriched by music, including the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, as well as a variety of trips, including residentials, which extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Pupils' experience is also enhanced by specialist teaching in French and design and technology through links with local high schools and in sport through the link with a local football club. The school also uses the outdoor learning environment to good effect to widen pupils' experience and learning.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet government requirements.
- The school has been successful in actively encouraging parents to be involved in its work and their children's learning through regular meetings, newsletters and the school website. Parents have a very positive view of the school and would recommend it to others.
- The school is committed to ensuring all pupils have an equal opportunity and to this end works well through the family support worker and with outside agencies and parents to remove any barriers to learning.
- The school has received good support from the local authority through a period of considerable change. It has provided support to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the skills of governors. The school has also benefited from support from consultants and through training courses to improve leadership skills among its staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need to be improved. Its members have undertaken training in interpreting data and regularly check the school's performance, including pupils' attainment and progress. They talk confidently about how the school has improved and about the achievement of different groups of pupils. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of staff, including how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised, for example, the effectiveness of the use of primary sports funding and of pupil premium funding. Governors are involved in the life of the school and meet regularly with senior leaders. As a result, they are able, through challenge and support, to hold leaders to account and set targets for further improvement. They have supported the school effectively during a period of considerable change and ensured the school has remained stable and has improved.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are considerate to each other, and work and play very well together. They take responsibility very seriously and are proud of their contribution to the school, for example, as school councillors.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and that learning is fun. Attendance is in line with the national average and improving. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy the opportunities they have to take part in sporting activities and that these experiences, including those after school, inspire them to do their best. A high proportion of pupils join in breakfast club sports activities before school. They particularly enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities on offer such as Bug Club, Extreme Reading and Enterprise Club.
- Pupils come to lessons equipped and ready to work. They take pride in their school, appreciate the pleasant surroundings and exciting displays, and take care of their classrooms and playground. They work responsibly and with enthusiasm and behave sensibly around the school and outside. They support each other well, for example, when working with a partner. They listen carefully to others and respect each other's views.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning, are keen to do well and, when given the opportunity, enter into a dialogue with their teachers about how to improve their work.
- Pupils who may have challenging behaviour are supported very effectively to make good choices; as a result, they are able to learn effectively and make good progress alongside their classmates. Incidences of poor behaviour are rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils have very good relationships with adults and with each other. They particularly value the relationships they have with their teachers and adults in the school, including the site manager, who they say all look after them very well.
- Pupils feel totally safe and are very confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with very promptly and effectively. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different forms of bullying, such as name-calling and cyber-bullying that can take place and know how to deal with it. They are taught very effectively to identify and manage potential risks to their well-being. They can clearly explain how to keep safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet, mobile technologies and social media.
- Pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe and their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle are impressive. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, that are provided which have a positive impact on their health and well-being.
- Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children feel safe and happy at the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and has been very effective in improving the standards attained by pupils across the school. Teaching is typically good and there are examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils are given frequent opportunities to work together in small groups and to discuss their ideas with a partner and, as a result, grow in confidence in explaining their ideas to others.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and ask pupils searching questions to see how much they have understood.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Year 2 and Year 3 pupils made very swift progress understanding how to set about subtraction because activities, led by the teacher and the teaching assistant, were very well matched to their needs. As they completed their set tasks, pupils' progress was very closely monitored. As a result, individuals were quickly given more challenge or more support as needed.
- Reading is taught effectively. Even the youngest pupils take pleasure in applying their knowledge of phonics to read and write words and simple sentences or read out what they have written.
- Teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in writing. A very well-sequenced series of activities, including role play, coupled with very effective questioning, enabled Year 6 pupils to make rapid progress in their understanding of how to use language persuasively.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English receive good support in acquiring a working knowledge of the language in one-to-one sessions or in small groups. However, in lessons where pupils are taught as a whole-class, they are not always given the support they need with understanding key

language and vocabulary. This means that they sometimes find tasks too difficult and this slows their progress overall.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are examples of outstanding practice. Where this is the case, the information gleaned from marking pupils' work determines pupils' precise next steps. Pupils respond very positively to teachers' comments and the extra challenges they set, maintaining an on-going dialogue with teachers about what they need to do next and regularly refining their work. However, pupils do not always receive the precise guidance they need to help them improve their work, particularly their writing and the accuracy of their spelling. As a result, the progress of some pupils is slower because they are not always aware of their mistakes.
- Although pupils are involved in evaluating their own and each other's work they are not always involved in deciding the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have frequent opportunities and say they particularly enjoy the experiences they have to increase their understanding of cultures other than their own.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since the previous inspection, standards across the school have risen significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress has accelerated and inspection evidence shows that it is good in all key stages.
- Unvalidated results from national tests in Year 6 in 2014 show that standards of attainment have greatly improved and are now average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. This reflects good progress from pupils' attainment the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them from their starting points has increased and now compares favourably with the proportion that do so nationally. School data and inspection evidence show that current progress through Key Stage 2 is good.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well overall and standards have risen. In Year 2 in 2014, teacher assessments indicate that standards are close to average overall. This represents good progress from pupils' lower starting points when they join Year 1. However, in Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is sometimes slower in writing because they are not always given the guidance they need to improve their work or the accuracy of their handwriting or spelling.
- Progress in reading and writing overall is good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their reading. Younger pupils develop a good understanding of the link between letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national reading screening check in Year 1 is average. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read a variety of texts with a good level of fluency and understanding. Most are able to talk in detail about what they have read and use a variety of texts, including dictionaries and the internet, to check meaning or find information. By the end of Year 6, pupils write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences, and use a good range of vocabulary and structures to do this.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. Pupils explain their working confidently and with increasing independence as they move through the school.
- The most able pupils are challenged to think hard in lessons and they demonstrate a maturity that helps them to make the most of their learning opportunities. The higher proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 and 6 compared to 2013, particularly in mathematics are indicative of the school's success at meeting the learning needs of the most able pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers, as a result of the very well-tailored extra help they are given, according to need, both in class and in groups.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well but their progress, although good overall, is sometimes slowed because they are not always given the support they need to understand key vocabulary and language in whole-class activities and so they find tasks too difficult.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about four terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in mathematics and writing and about five terms behind in reading. These wide gaps have now closed and disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers. The extra help and support provided for disadvantaged pupils through additional funding, such as from additional teaching assistants, enables these pupils to reach their targets and make the same good progress as non-disadvantaged pupils in the school.

The early years provision**is good**

- Many children start in the early years provision with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age. Many children face considerable challenges and have weak skills particularly in speech and language and personal and social skills. Many join speaking no English.
- Children make good progress and achieve well in the Reception classes as a result of consistently good teaching and the focus upon developing their speech, language and social skills. Although their skills have improved, on entry to Year 1, many are still working towards achieving a good level of development.
- Purposeful activities are planned very well and designed to interest and encourage children to show initiative and to meet children's individual needs. Activities change regularly to reflect themes in teaching and children's interests. Adults lead activities with enthusiasm, which immediately captures children's interest. The focus on the development of language and social skills and an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and those children choose themselves, ensures they make good progress.
- The outdoor area is used well and provides lots of opportunities which excite children's interest to explore and investigate; they do this with enthusiasm.
- As a result of the well-established routines and effective procedures for making sure their transition from home or pre-school settings is a smooth one, children settle in quickly, behave well and are aware of how to stay safe from the outset. Staff make sure children feel secure and happy so they are willing to learn. Children are used to routines, respond very positively to the high expectations of adults, take turns, increase in independence and learn and play well together. They clearly enjoy joining in activities such as songs and games to practise their phonics skills.
- The provision is very well led and managed. As a result, teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection. Adults work together very effectively as a cohesive team. They monitor individual progress closely on a daily basis and use this information effectively to plan next steps for children's learning. Adults know individuals very well and take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and to extend their learning.

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	111219
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	450580

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Flude
Headteacher	Nikki Lawton
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2013
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