

# Long Knowle Primary School

Blackwood Avenue, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton WV11 1EB

**Inspection dates** 19–20 January 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious vision for Long Knowle. They know what is working well and what needs to be done next. Expectations are high. Staff across the school fully support the drive for improvement.
- Leaders' work has led to marked improvements in teaching, pupils' achievement and in their behaviour, attitudes and attendance.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in a range of subjects, because the quality of teaching is good.
- Disadvantaged pupils do just as well as, and sometimes better than, others in school and across the country.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Skilled teaching helps them make rapid progress in all areas of learning.
- Letters and sounds are taught very well. As a result, pupils are keen and confident readers.
- Staff have pupils' welfare at heart and take effective steps to keep them safe. The programme of personal, social and health education is particularly strong.
- Pupils are usually well behaved, sociable and polite. Older pupils enjoy the chances they have to take on responsibilities and to help others.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all parents fully understand and support the changes that have been made over the past 18 months.
- Few pupils make the excellent progress that is needed to attain highly.
- There is still some variability in the quality of teaching. Although they are aware of what pupils know and can do, teachers sometimes do not use this knowledge well enough to ensure that the work they ask pupils to do is sufficiently challenging.

## Full report

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

- Redouble efforts to engage with those families that are harder to reach, so that they fully understand the school's long-term vision and the reasons for changes that are made. Seek the views of parents more actively, for example by conducting regular surveys, and respond to the issues raised.
- Take steps to make sure that pupils' progress continues to accelerate and more pupils exceed the attainment that is expected for their age by:
  - providing training and support for individual teachers so that their practice matches the best in the school
  - helping teachers to use the outcomes of their assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do more effectively when they plan tasks and activities, so that pupils do not mark time, but deepen or extend their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, with the support of other senior leaders and governors, has worked with dogged determination to change the school's culture from one that was content with things as they were to one where there are high expectations of pupils and staff. This process has not been without challenges, but the impact shows in the clear improvements in the quality of teaching, in pupils' behaviour, their attendance and their achievement.
- Senior leaders work effectively together and have brought much greater rigour and clarity to the school's systems and procedures. Staff at all levels support the school's direction and purpose. All staff who completed the online questionnaire said that they are proud to work at Long Knowle and that they understand what they are striving to achieve.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and the next steps are appropriate.
- Subject leadership is increasingly effective. As a result of close checks on teaching, pupils' books and outcomes for pupils, changes have been made to the ways in which English and mathematics are taught. These are having a positive impact on achievement.
- Teachers are held closely to account for their performance. Where needed, support and training are provided, but teachers are expected to meet the targets that are agreed for them. Where, despite the school's support, targets are not met, pay increases are not recommended. Leaders are working closely with teachers new to the school to help them improve their practice as quickly as possible.
- The school's curriculum makes relevant links between subjects and engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm. It emphasises many of the skills, knowledge and attributes that pupils will need to help them take their place in modern Britain. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently studying the topic 'earning a living'. Through the curriculum for personal, social and health education, religious education and the opportunities they have to contribute to the school, pupils learn about the importance of respect for others, tolerance and responsibility. This also makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's use of the pupil premium and primary PE and sport premium is well thought out. The positive impact of the pupil premium spending shows in the way any gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others narrow as they progress through the school. The employment of sports coaches has brought benefits. Pupils' enthusiasm and take-up of sport has increased and teachers have improved their skills in teaching aspects of physical education. Many pupils now take part in after-school clubs and activities.
- Close attention is given to making sure that pupils are safe and protected. All procedures have recently been revised to make sure that they reflect the most recent guidance. Checks on prospective staff are rigorous. Staff know individual pupils well and watch out for those who may be potentially vulnerable. Staff at all levels know what to do should they have a concern, and the school is tenacious in following up once a referral has been made. Should a pupil be removed from the school for any reason, this is carefully followed up to make sure that the child is safe.
- On the whole, the school enjoys positive relationships with parents and families. A small minority, however, are not convinced of the necessity of some of the changes that have been made. For example, the increased rigour in tackling absence and the closure of the gate to the car park at the beginning and end of the day have not been universally well received. The school's self-evaluation rightly acknowledges that improving partnerships with these families is a priority.
- The school's leaders have worked closely with the local authority since the last inspection. The local authority has provided effective support and has also kept a close eye on the rate of improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body has strengthened the part that it plays in the life of the school and in helping set its strategic direction. Governors know that in the past they were too willing to accept information that was presented to them. Minutes of governing body meetings show that they now routinely ask challenging questions and probe for further information. They expect leaders to justify proposals that are made. Governors also hold the school to account for spending decisions, for example for the pupil premium funding.
  - Governors understand the school's procedures for setting targets for teachers' performance and for awarding pay increases. They are fully involved in considering the evidence before coming to decisions.

- Following an audit of skills of members of the governing body, new members are being sought who will add breadth and depth to governors' knowledge. Governors actively seek training that will improve their knowledge and understanding of their role, and to make sure that they are fully aware of important matters such as safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. The local authority recently carried out a review of governance and found growing strengths in the governing body's work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved a great deal since the school was last inspected. This is because teachers have responded well to the higher expectations set out in the school's policy for teaching and learning. They have been consistent in implementing the school's agreed procedures, for example for assessment and for feedback to pupils. Routines are now well established and pupils know what to expect.
- Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and expect them to do their best. Pupils typically rise to this expectation and in lessons they concentrate and make sure that their work is well presented. They show a growing pride in their work. Some displays around the school, for example of completed artwork or pieces of writing, are of high quality and contribute to an environment that is bright, clean and which celebrates learning.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils have a good grounding in letters and sounds. The school has a good stock of books for pupils of all ages, both in classrooms and in communal areas. Pupils are keen to read; younger pupils rushed to get their book bags when asked if they would like to read to an inspector. Pupils' reading diaries show that parents are frequently involved in listening to their child read at home.
- Teachers build well on the improvements to pupils' speaking and listening skills that happen in the early years. Teachers and pupils often discuss ideas and opinions. Both teachers and teaching assistants are quick to ask pupils to explain what they mean or to develop their answer further, probing both pupils' understanding and promoting their confidence in speaking at length.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, working closely with the teachers to make sure pupils' needs are met. Some also play a leading role in teaching, for example, art and personal, social and health education.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their learning in lessons, partly because lessons can be fun, but also because teachers help them if they get stuck, and show them what to do next. This shows in the pupils' books, where it is clear that pupils try hard, usually finish their work and take note of any comments that the teachers have written.
- Teachers assess pupils' attainment and measure their progress regularly. Not all are equally skilled at using the assessments to make sure that work builds well on what pupils know already and takes them forward. Occasionally, pupils mark time rather than deepening their knowledge and understanding. This is one reason why teaching and pupils' progress are not outstanding.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good. Staff take care to get to know the pupils and their families well and provide support where it is needed. For example, the family support worker helps individual pupils understand and deal with any difficulties they may be facing through the provision of 'draw and talk' and play therapy sessions.
- The school's curriculum, particularly the comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education, teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in potentially risky situations, such as when using the internet. It also teaches pupils respect for others and for difference, and how to deal with different types of bullying. Visits from charities such as ChildLine, local police officers and the school nurse help pupils to know what to do if they are troubled, to learn about right and wrong and what to expect as they approach young adulthood.
- Staff and pupils treat one another respectfully. As they grow older, pupils' self-confidence grows. Pupils understand that they will sometimes make mistakes, but that this is part of learning.

- Breakfast club gives a small group of pupils a sociable and calm start to the day. All pupils can help themselves to toast as they arrive at school and this makes sure that nobody is hungry as they start lessons.
- Pupils have many chances to take responsibility and to help others, for example by acting as peer mentors, playing with younger pupils at lunchtimes, acting as 'ambassadors' for the school and by standing for election to the school council. This helps them develop the social skills and maturity that will serve them well as they grow older.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they are not worried about the behaviour of others or about bullying. Should instances of bullying or name-calling occur, they are confident that staff, including the school meals supervisors at lunchtime, would sort it out.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Around school, in lessons and at break and lunchtimes, pupils are polite, friendly and respectful. They are keen to talk and to share their opinions.
- Pupils know that staff have high expectations for their behaviour and they and their parents sign to say they understand the 'non-negotiables' for behaviour at school. All classes follow the same system for rewarding good behaviour and for highlighting when behaviour has slipped. As a result, behaviour has improved.
- As well as having high expectations for how pupils will behave, staff work to help pupils improve their own behaviour, by teaching techniques for managing confrontations or arguments.
- The school's records show that most instances of inappropriate behaviour are very low-level and there is little that requires follow-up, for example by contacting parents. The records confirm, however, that pupils do not behave impeccably at all times, which is why behaviour overall is good, rather than outstanding.
- Pupils typically concentrate in lessons and respond with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils usually present their work neatly and take care of their books.
- As a result of the school's concerted efforts and a tougher stance, attendance has risen and is in line with the national figure for primary schools. Fewer pupils are persistently absent.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Across the school, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects and achieve well. Work in pupils' books and on display show good progress in art, science and history, for example, as well as in English and mathematics.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check last year was above the national figure, and by the end of Year 2, every pupil had met the standard. This means that pupils are well equipped to work out unfamiliar words when they are reading.
- Last year, every pupil in Year 2 reached the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, having made good progress across Key Stage 1. The school's assessments show that this is likely to continue. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 3, however, was smaller than the national figure. Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, and between those who have special educational needs and other pupils, were considerably narrower than the gaps seen nationally.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 last year, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in all three of reading, writing and mathematics matched the national figure. As such, the pupils were well prepared for the next steps at secondary school. However, as at Key Stage 1, the proportions reaching higher levels were below the national figures, apart from in writing.
- Overall, these outcomes represent good progress from pupils' typically low starting points. The progress of disadvantaged pupils matched or, in the case of writing, exceeded the progress made by all pupils nationally. The small number of disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs made strong progress in writing. Their progress in reading and mathematics was broadly as expected from their starting points.
- All pupils made particularly strong progress in writing, and the school's assessments show that this trend is continuing. However, last year's results in reading dipped because a small number of pupils did not

make the progress that was expected of them. Swift and concerted action has been taken to improve the teaching of reading in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils are back on track and achievement in reading across the school matches that in writing and mathematics.

- Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are quickly spotted, because teachers regularly discuss the achievement of pupils in their class with senior leaders. The next steps needed to help them catch up are agreed and implemented. Similarly, pupils who have special educational needs, or who are disabled, follow special programmes to help them with aspects that they find more difficult. These interventions are time-limited and the impact carefully evaluated. As a consequence, these pupils make as much progress as others, and sometimes more.
- By the time they leave school at the age of 11, gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others are small.
- More-able pupils typically make at least the progress that is expected of them. Numbers of these pupils are small, however.

## Early years provision

is good

- When they start in the Nursery or Reception class, many children have difficulties in managing their personal needs and in playing sociably with others. Often, their skills in speaking and listening are underdeveloped. As a result of skilful interventions from the staff, the children typically settle in quickly and begin to learn.
- Children make good progress overall because teaching typically takes account of their learning needs. Staff make frequent notes about what children know and can do, and work out what they need to learn next. Occasionally, however, staff do not seize the opportunity to deepen or extend understanding when some children show that they are already confident with what is being taught.
- The nursery staff are particularly good at using songs, rhymes and routines that encourage children to listen, join in and respond. This is effective in developing both children's social skills and their confidence in speaking.
- Because children make good progress across all of the areas of learning, they start to catch up on what is expected of five-year-olds by the end of the Reception Year. Over the past three years, the proportion of children who have reached a good level of development has increased substantially and is close to the figure for children nationally. Disadvantaged children make good progress too; the gap between their attainment and that of other children is narrower than that seen nationally. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Staff across the early years model the gentle and considerate behaviour that is expected and take great pains to teach children how to share, take turns, be aware of the needs of others and look after their own needs. Children behave well as a result.
- Staff make sure that the environment is safe, indoors and out. They have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and the particular things to look out for in the early years. Relationships with parents are good. Parents have many chances to stay and play, attend workshops, support their children's early reading skills and contribute their own observations to their child's record.
- The early years leader works with an infectious enthusiasm. The Nursery and Reception classes now work closely together, sharing the same outdoor space, and easing transition between the two classes. The early years leader is keen to improve provision, particularly outdoors, still further. She is also working with the local authority on a project to increase the involvement of parents and to develop and refine the use of assessment.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104320
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10007805

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Corbett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Elliot
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558985
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.longknowleprimary.co.uk">www.longknowleprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@longknowleprimary.co.uk">office@longknowleprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29–30 January 2014

## Information about this school

- Long Knowle is similar in size to most primary schools. Children start school either in the part-time nursery class or full time in the Reception class. A few pupils join the school in other year groups over the course of the year.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Just under a quarter are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Few do not speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much greater than the national figure. The school receives funding known as the pupil premium to support the education of these pupils and that of the small number of children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and for whom the school provides support is similar to that seen nationally.
- Since the school was last inspected there have been many changes to staffing. The headteacher took up her post at Long Knowle in September 2014 and the deputy headteacher started at the school at the same time. The assistant headteacher joined the school in January 2015. Several teachers are also new to the school. There have also been changes in the membership of the governing body.
- The results of tests and assessments taken by pupils in Year 6 in 2015 met the government's floor standard.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team made many visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning. This included observations of lessons and a class assembly, looking at pupils' work in a range of subjects in their books, and a series of shorter visits to find out about the school's approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics. Most of these activities were carried out alongside a member of the senior leadership team.
- The inspection team spoke informally to pupils, parents and staff at various times during the inspection, including break, lunchtime and the end of the school day. They also had formal meetings with pupils, school leaders, other staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The inspectors also took account of the views of parents and staff as expressed in online questionnaires.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: those published on the school's website; the school's records of recruitment and vetting checks; other documents related to safeguarding pupils; the school's self-evaluation; actions plans; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Linda McGill, lead inspector

Paul Whitcombe

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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