

# Lache Primary School

Hawthorn Road, Lache, Chester, Cheshire CH4 8HX

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- While improving, pupils' progress is not yet consistently good among the current year groups and across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils made considerably less progress in writing in key stage 2 than all pupils nationally.
- As a result of good and improving teaching, pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to make better progress, especially in English and mathematics, but it is not yet strong enough.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national averages in writing and mathematics, but close to average in reading. In addition, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics check was below the national figure.
- Less than half the children in the Reception Year reached a good level of development in 2016. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics was not fast enough.
- Teachers in the early years develop children's physical and social skills well but do not place enough emphasis on ensuring that they have the skills in reading, writing and mathematics to make a successful start in Year 1.
- Leaders have not yet checked whether their use of pupil premium funding is effective. Subject leaders do not check that their actions bring improvements in pupils' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders are clear about the school's priorities. The actions they are taking are starting to help pupils make faster progress.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are increasingly effective and contributing well to the picture of improving progress.
- The school is a nurturing environment that cares for pupils well.
- Governors have a clear view of the school's areas for development and provide strong challenge and support to school leaders.
- Parents are very happy with the work of the school and appreciate how well staff look after their children and keep them safe.
- Pupils are now making faster progress in phonics. Standards in key stage 1 are rising.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make rapid progress with greater consistency across all year groups and across a wide range of subjects by:
  - improving pupils' writing skills and providing opportunities to apply them across the curriculum
  - improving pupils' mathematical skills and developing more opportunities to apply them in different contexts
  - providing more challenge to the most able pupils in writing by allowing them to make their own decisions about the layout and content of their work.
- In the early years, place more emphasis on developing children's reading, writing and mathematical skills so that they make faster progress and a majority of them are ready for Year 1 by the end of their Reception Year.
- Continue to improve subject leadership by:
  - implementing the new assessment and tracking procedures across subjects so that they are as effective as in reading, writing and mathematics
  - developing sharper evaluations of leaders' actions that focus on their impact on pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Senior leaders realise that the school's current published standards do not compare favourably with national figures. They are ambitious to return to the broadly good achievement of pupils before the revised assessment procedures of 2016 were introduced. They have written a school development plan with well-chosen actions that focus on the key areas for improvement. As a result, teaching is good and improving, and pupils are beginning to make good progress. Pupils in upper key stage 2 are predicted to achieve improved results at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders manage the performance of teachers well. They set individual targets that are linked to, for example, pupils' achievement or the development of teachers' leadership roles. Leaders evaluate the work of teachers effectively and make recommendations for improvement. They plan a programme of effective training to support teachers' continuing professional development.
- Staff are proud to be part of the school team. They feel valued because the headteacher and other senior staff listen to their views and act on them where appropriate. They are supportive of the changes the headteacher has brought in since his arrival in September 2015, such as improvements to the management of pupils' behaviour.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. As well as the subjects of the national curriculum, there is a programme of cross-curricular activities, such as special assemblies, themed weeks, including an anti-bullying week, visits from the local police to talk about law and order and opportunities to learn about other faiths. A range of clubs is available to pupils, such as music, coding, drama and several sports clubs. All of these activities contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and give them a clear understanding of British values.
- Senior leaders have used pupil premium funding for a combination of pastoral support, to encourage engagement and better attitudes to learning among pupils, and learning support to improve academic achievement. Pupils' engagement and attitudes have shown good improvement, but their academic performance is still below what it should be, with recent assessment information showing a substantial difference between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally. Leaders have not yet analysed the use of pupil premium funding to understand how they can improve the way these pupils can build on the faster progress that is beginning to emerge.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used well. The money has been used to provide specialist coaches to develop the skills of staff and to take part in competitions for schools through the local sports partnership. It has also been used to provide clubs for dance and judo and to buy sports equipment to encourage pupils to take part in more physical activity at lunchtime.
- Subject leaders have a good view of the current priorities for the school, especially in mathematics and English. Other subject leaders monitor their subjects well through such activities as work scrutiny. They are currently developing a more focused assessment process to improve their overview of standards. However, they do not consistently evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement to check how effective they have been.

- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well used, as pupils make good progress from their starting points. The special educational needs coordinator leads the provision effectively. The resource base provision is also well run and effective.
- The local authority's adviser provides effective support to the school. She recognises that outcomes in 2016 were a concern and, as a result, has confirmed that the local authority will be providing further support to the school in the coming year.
- A substantial majority of parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the school's nurturing environment and feel that their children make good progress. They are highly satisfied that the school communicates with them effectively.
- There are some omissions from the information provided on the school's website. Leaders are aware of this and have taken action to rectify matters.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development. They are ambitious to secure rapid improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Governors are well trained in safeguarding and clearly understand their responsibilities.
- The governing body holds leaders firmly to account. Governors ask searching questions about the progress and attainment of pupils and are keen to know the effectiveness of actions that leaders are taking. They have not, however, assured themselves that the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been spent effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Teachers care for their pupils well and there are positive relationships between them. School leaders put the welfare of pupils, particularly the more vulnerable, at the centre of their work. The school involves parents and external agencies appropriately to keep pupils safe.
- The single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children is accurately maintained.
- Staff are regularly trained in safeguarding matters and are very knowledgeable about reporting processes and how to recognise signs of abuse.

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

**Good**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting and engaging lessons. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have typically been making improved progress since the start of the year, and are now gaining appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. Some of this progress, especially in mathematics and English, is good. Staff are aware, however, that the majority of pupils still have some ground to cover before their standards are close to national figures.
- Pupils show positive attitudes in class and behave well because their teachers have high expectations and manage pupils' behaviour effectively. There are warm relationships between teachers and pupils. The majority of pupils take pride in their work and this can be seen in their neat presentation.
- Most teachers and teaching assistants question pupils well, allowing them to think more deeply about their work or providing opportunities to use their reasoning skills to

explain their responses. This contributes well to the improvements in progress made by pupils.

- The teaching of phonics in Year 1 has improved considerably since the current teacher took over the role at the start of the current school year. Pupils are beginning to make strong progress in their learning as a result.
- It is clear from pupils' workbooks that the standard of work expected from the most able pupils is higher than that from other pupils, especially in writing and mathematics. In most year groups in mathematics, the most able pupils are given tasks that challenge and stretch them. For example, pupils in Year 6 tackled puzzles involving prime numbers that required a deeper level of reasoning.
- Teachers give pupils opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding of writing in other subjects. The resource sheets that teachers provide, however, limit the choices the most able pupils can make about the content and structure of their writing in, for example, science or geography. This means they have less chance of developing their writing skills by applying their knowledge and understanding more extensively.
- There are some examples of mathematics skills being applied in, for example, science. In Year 1, pupils complete table templates with measurements and successfully arrange them in ascending order. Teachers provide fewer opportunities to use mathematics in different contexts than they do with writing.
- Teachers provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They provide modified tasks or deploy their teaching assistants effectively. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and know that they should inform an adult if they have any concerns.
- A large majority of children have positive attitudes to learning. They find it enjoyable and they like their class teachers.
- Pupils understand different forms of bullying. They say it happens rarely in school, but they trust their teachers to deal effectively with any incidents that arise.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. The school is an orderly and calm place because staff make their expectations of good behaviour clear to pupils.
- Teachers manage behaviour well. A new behaviour policy has recently been introduced that is clearly effective. While there are a few occurrences of pupils being distracted from their learning, these do not amount to disruption, as teachers are quick to intervene.
- At lunchtime, pupils enjoy chatting with their friends as they eat. Pupils play well together on the playground.
- Senior leaders have put effective incentives and strategies in place to improve attendance, which has typically been below average. It is currently higher than it was in the last school year and is close to the national average.

- There have been no permanent exclusions. The number of fixed-term exclusions for the current year has reduced from the previous year; such sanctions are uncommon.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Senior leaders recognise that recent external assessment information showed attainment and progress were mostly below national figures. They have taken action, including changing the deployment of teaching staff, to make improvements since the start of the current academic year. As a result pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are now making stronger progress, but it is not yet consistently good in all year groups and across all subjects.
- Inconsistency in progress can be seen, for example, in Year 1, where lower-ability and most-able pupils all begin with work in mathematics that is more suited to the Reception Year. As a result, the most able pupils are not yet making the progress of which they are capable. Furthermore, in science in Year 3, there are few examples yet of pupils being given the opportunity to develop their skills in writing across the curriculum.
- Published assessment information for the phonics check in Year 1 shows that, while about two thirds of pupils typically reach the expected standard, this proportion is substantially below the national average. The school's assessments suggest that this proportion is set to improve, as a result of the better teaching that is taking place.
- The published assessment information for 2016 shows that the proportions of pupils in key stage 1 reaching at least the expected standard in writing and in mathematics were below national figures. Progress in writing and mathematics in key stage 2 was well below national averages. The school's average scores for reading and for mathematics were also below the expected standard.
- Some assessment information for 2016 was positive. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 1 was close to the national average. Their progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 was slightly above the national score for all pupils and the score in mathematics was above the threshold for sufficient progress. For the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, progress by the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with the national scores across all subjects and groups, with some scores above the expected standard.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making at least the expected progress from their differing starting points, with a significant proportion making more than the expected progress. This includes the pupils who attend the resource base provision in the school. This is because leaders meet their needs well, putting in place well-targeted support and interventions.
- In some year groups, evidence from pupils' work shows that they make good progress. In Year 6, for example, pupils' learning in mathematics moves quickly on from place value to calculations involving negative numbers. In the most able pupils' books, more challenging work, for instance solving problems involving factors, is evident.
- Pupils' progress in phonics in Year 1 has greatly improved this year. There has been a focus on pupils who needed to catch up, after entering Year 1 without reaching a good level of development. These pupils are showing that they are quickly acquiring phonic skills and knowledge that match their age and stage of development.
- Most pupils read accurately and with fluency appropriate to their age. Those pupils who

need to do so use their phonic knowledge to good effect to read unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy reading and regularly take books home to read to adults in line with the school's usual practice. The most able pupils read expressively and clearly, with a good degree of confidence.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children start school with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. A substantial proportion have barriers to their learning, including slow development of their social and communication skills. During their time in the early years, they make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing, but overall their progress in these specific areas of learning is too slow to ensure they join Year 1 with the skills they need. In the prime areas of learning, however, they make stronger progress, as teachers work hard to improve their physical development and their communication and language skills.
- The most recently published assessment information shows that just over half of children in the early years reached a good level of development in 2015, which was below the national average. Disadvantaged children also achieved substantially below others nationally, suggesting that pupil premium funding was not being used effectively to support these children's learning.
- Provisional information for 2016 shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development dropped to 46%, which is well below the national average. As a result, a substantial proportion of children were not ready to start Year 1.
- The early years leader recognises the need for improvement. She has identified priorities for development in the current year and has devised an action plan. The plan, however, lacks detail about how the actions will tackle the priorities or how the impact of the actions on children's achievement will be evaluated. Teaching in the early years does not focus sufficiently on ensuring that pupils have the necessary skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics to make a confident start in Year 1.
- As part of the current improvement actions, senior leaders have used funding provided by a local charities organisation to appoint a speech and language therapist. She works full time in the early years to develop the communication skills of disadvantaged pupils in this year group. Leaders have also used some of the school's pupil premium funding to support a reading volunteer programme. These initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on this group and this is shown through, for example, the positive relationships that exist between the children.
- Teachers plan a range of engaging activities in areas other than reading, writing and mathematics, both indoors and outdoors, which interest the majority of children. They use finger puppets, for example, to act out a story they have heard, and this develops their communication skills well. A significant number of children, including boys, choose writing activities and enjoy making shopping lists.
- Children show good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning because their teachers set appropriate expectations.
- Parents are very happy with the partnership they have with the school. They are kept well informed of their child's progress through formal parents' evenings and through frequent informal communications.
- Safeguarding is effective and all welfare requirements are met. Staff are regularly

trained and understand how to respond if they have safeguarding concerns. Children show that they feel safe through their behaviour and through the warm relationships with the adults who look after them.

## School details

Unique reference number	131350
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10001026

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Turner
Headteacher	Rob Pullen
Telephone number	01244 981 333
Website	<a href="http://www.lache.cheshire.sch.uk/">www.lache.cheshire.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@lache.cheshire.sch.uk">head@lache.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2012

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about: performance data; the school's curriculum; the evaluation of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; charging and remissions; and governors' attendance at committee meetings. School leaders are aware of these omissions and have taken action to remedy them.
- Lache Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support in school for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is more than twice the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The school has a resource base provision for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. This unit serves the wider area as well as the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Four of these were joint observations between the headteacher and the lead inspector. The headteacher was also present at meetings of the inspection team.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of checks on teaching and learning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour logs and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including members of staff, governors, a representative of the local authority, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils' writing and mathematics, as well as their work in other subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- The lead inspector also evaluated 10 responses received through 'Parent View' (the online survey), one response to the pupil questionnaire and 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The resource base provision was included in the inspection.

## Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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