

Lostock Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111156
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	337629
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Mr Paul Bamber

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	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Barber
Headteacher	Mr Graham Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, governors' minutes, records of pupils' progress, pupils' work, the school's analysis of 2009 test results and teacher assessments, examples of individual education plans and the School Improvement Partner's record of visits. Questionnaires completed by parents and carers, staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well standards in writing throughout the school, especially that of boys, and whether pupils' ability to solve problems and investigate in mathematics and science, have improved sufficiently since the last inspection
- how good were planning and assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the school's promotion of community cohesion, pupils' cultural development and how effectively the curriculum reflected the local community and its heritage.

Information about the school

This smaller than average-sized school serves an area of relative social and economic advantage. Lower proportions of pupils than found nationally are entitled to free school meals, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Reception class. The governors manage before- and after-school clubs. In addition, there is a privately run Nursery on the school site. Its provision is the subject of a separate inspection and the report can be found on the Ofsted website.

The school has gained awards for promoting sport, exercise and basic skills and has Investors in People status. During the spring and summer terms of the last academic year the school was run by the assistant headteacher owing to the secondment of the headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school 1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement 1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Excellent leadership and management ensure that teaching and learning are of high quality, that pupils enjoy a rich and stimulating curriculum, develop extremely well as responsible and concerned young citizens and that there is first-class care, guidance and support provided for pupils, staff and parents.

Leaders and managers, most ably led by the headteacher, assistant headteacher and governors, relentlessly evaluate the school's provision and the standards and achievements of pupils and staff. Success is amply celebrated but improvement continuously sought. As a result, there have been excellent improvements since the school's last inspection. This is very evident in pupils' standards and in their ability to solve problems and investigate, especially in mathematics and science lessons, and in improvements in the quality of pupils' writing. Boys in particular are now reaching much higher standards and making much better progress in writing. Since the last inspection, the leadership's drive to improve the impact of teaching and learning has resulted in their quality now being outstanding. This has led to a rise in standards so that pupils throughout the school attain significantly above the average in English, mathematics and science. This outstanding record of improvement demonstrates that the school has an excellent capacity to sustain the high standards and excellent provision currently evident. Excellent leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children in Reception get off to a flying start and settle very quickly and happily into school.

Very secure systems, which fully meet requirements, exist to ensure pupils' and adults' safety. Pupils respond extremely positively to the school's programmes and strategies to promote their good health and well-being.

Aspects of the excellent curriculum which particularly stand out are the success of the implementation of the detailed plans for teaching mixed-age classes and the extensive range of after-school clubs available to pupils of all ages. Parents are particularly pleased with the care provided for their children, including the before- and after-school clubs.

There are particularly rigorous systems to check on pupils' progress which enable staff to intervene very appropriately to support any pupil who is making slower progress or to accelerate the learning of high achievers.

Governance is excellent and has a great strength in working closely with senior leaders in strategic development. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good overall, excellent as regards the local community, but currently links with communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and abroad are more limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by:
 - establishing closer links with wider United Kingdom and international communities
 - making pupils more keenly aware of the rich cultural diversity of the wide range of minority ethnic communities that are represented in this country.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The impact of excellent leadership and management is that pupils' progress has accelerated and is now outstanding. As a result, standards have risen incrementally over the last three years so that they are now significantly higher than the national average in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Generally, children enter Reception with abilities above those typical for their age, make excellent progress in this class and move on to Year 1 demonstrating well above expected attainment and learning. Excellent teaching ensures that their progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 continues apace and high standards are maintained throughout.

Pupils clearly understand the purpose of what they do, take responsibility for the progress they make and thoroughly enjoy learning. At the end of an excellent mathematics lesson, for example, pupils left the teacher in no doubt about whether they fully understood or not the concepts they had been taught. Pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' rigorous target setting and marking. They are clear about the progress they make towards their targets and indicate that they have noted teachers' comments about their work and where they feel they have addressed areas for improvement in their subsequent work.

The vast majority of pupils feel safe. They are confident that their peers are kind and pose no threat to them. Members of the school council are adamant that there is no bullying. Pupils have a very clear understanding and respect for rules which ensure their safety in and around school and are confident that they would know how to respond to any perceived dangers by seeking help from sympathetic adults. Most pupils eat a balanced diet and actively encourage the promotion of healthy lifestyles by participating in the wide range of sport-related after-school activities available. Three successive years of attaining the Activemark reflects pupils' enthusiasm for exercise-related activities.

Overall, behaviour is good. On most occasions pupils are polite, welcoming and attentive in lessons. They show consideration for others and a large majority respond quickly and positively to staff's requests to behave very well. In a small minority of lessons a few pupils are less attentive and slower to follow adults' instructions and adhere to agreed codes of conduct. Although mostly short-lived these episodes explain why a small minority of pupils and staff state that behaviour is not always as exemplary as it should be.

Pupils' attendance is well above the national average. Their excellent punctuality is one example among many of their outstanding acquisition of workplace and other skills which equip them extremely well for their next step in education and in life. Chief among these is their ability to take responsibility, to be active and positive members of the school and local community and to work cooperatively in teams to problem solve. Pupils also show great concern for those less fortunate than themselves, play an active part in school decision making and are concerned for the environment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The excellent quality of teaching promotes high standards and very effective learning. Typically in classrooms, teachers' high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work, and of their attitudes and behaviour, result in very positive, highly productive lessons. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, creative use of the outdoor areas and very good use of questions are other significant contributions to the high quality of pupils' learning. Very effective also is pupils' application of their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills to support their learning right across the curriculum. Highly competent teaching assistants provide excellent support and work in very close productive partnership with class teachers to promote pupils' very effective learning.

The creative curriculum is innovative and promotes high standards and considerable enjoyment. The needs of pupils of all abilities are met extremely well in the

predominantly mixed-age classes. A particular strength is the gelling of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to provide younger Year 1 pupils with an extremely well-tailored teaching programme. Other strengths in the curriculum include the way in which pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship development is promoted, the wealth of extra-curricular activities and the use of the locality to make learning in, for example, history and geography, more relevant to pupils.

The care, guidance and support provided are excellent. Pupils and parents are very clear about this. They identify as a key strength of the school the efforts staff make to ensure that any concerns are dealt with quickly and positively. The arrangements to ensure pupils' safety are highly effective and the welfare of pupils and adults is of paramount importance. There are highly effective procedures for transition between the privately run Nursery and the Reception class and for transfer to secondary school. Decisions about which children will be in which mixed-age class are handled sensitively and parents kept well informed. Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with emotional or behavioural difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language are excellent. Early diagnosis and very appropriate actions are taken to enable these pupils to achieve very well, to play a full part and to thoroughly enjoy school. Strategies to ensure good behaviour, regular attendance and excellent punctuality are very successful.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Very strong leadership underpinned by extremely rigorous self-evaluation, an extremely clear vision and a relentless determination to pursue constant improvement, ensure that pupils receive a highly effective all-round education. Systems for safeguarding pupils are extremely robust and fully meet requirements. The concise school improvement plan provides clear priorities and actions to address any perceived relative weakness in pupils' performance, in provision or in management. There is a corporate approach to improvement planning which includes all staff, governors and parents. Regular, rigorous evaluations of the progress made towards meeting targets, or success criteria, ensure that momentum is sustained. This highly effective practice results in continuous improvement in all aspects of the school's work.

Great care is taken to value the contributions of all staff. As a result, morale is high and managers and leaders are committed and highly competent. The effectiveness of management in promoting professional development and inclusion is recognised in the Investors in People status gained by the school. Testament to the excellent way

in which leadership has been developed is the very successful acting headship by the assistant headteacher during the recent two-term secondment of the headteacher. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's work and is reflected in its very effective promotion of equal opportunities and in its most successful efforts to eliminate any discrimination.

All staff are held rigorously to account for their performance and appropriate checks on the quality of teaching and learning ensure that any improvements necessary are identified and subsequently addressed through mentoring or training.

Community cohesion is well promoted overall, extremely well at the local level. For example, pupils' personal, social and citizenship education benefits considerably from their involvement both in local community projects and in the Pupils' Forum at local government level. The school embraces the local community, making available its premises to a range of local organisations, including the church, sports clubs and a Brownie pack. However, the governors' audit and evaluation of the school's provision for community cohesion acknowledge that the links with wider United Kingdom and overseas communities are currently undeveloped. Links with parents are good. There is a very active parents' association, information about the curriculum is sent home regularly, there is a weekly newsletter, workshops and parents are invited to contribute to school improvement planning.

Governors have a crucial and strategic role in the school. The governing body is extremely ably led by its chairperson who ensures that every aspect of the school's work is rigorously checked by governors and that prudent financial control and planning is maintained.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents, both in questionnaire and in the meeting held with them, were fulsome in their praise for the excellent provision in the Reception class. Inspectors agree with this view. After only three weeks in Reception, children are settled well, they self-register and clearly thoroughly enjoy their time in school. Highly effective planning, based on the close observations of what children know, understand and can do, ensures that activities both stimulate and challenge children of all abilities. Close

liaison with the Nursery means that children arrive in Reception comfortable with their surroundings and familiar with the adults and the Year 1 pupils with whom they share work and play areas. This attention to detail, combined with excellent welfare arrangements that fully meet requirements, mean that children thrive. Staff ensure that children have the appropriate balance of support and independence and continually prompt and question to help children to develop basic academic and personal skills. Often the weaker areas of children’s learning on entry to Reception are their creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. By the time they enter Year 1 their attainment in these areas is on a par with all others and consistently well above expectations.

Excellent leadership and management promote this high-quality provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has forged a strong, committed and highly competent team which ensures that parents are fully included in all aspects of their children’s provision and kept regularly informed, usually daily, of their progress. The outcomes for children are of a consistently high quality; they have excellent experiences and have full access to provision according to their needs.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are predominantly happy with the school’s work. Unanimously respondents endorse how safe their children are in school and how much they enjoy school. The vast majority are pleased with the progress their children make, the quality of teaching, the school’s promotion of a healthy lifestyle and behaviour management. Inspectors agree with these positive views. It is evident though from their questionnaire responses that some parents and carers still have a few concerns about aspects of the school’s work. For example, 10% of respondents felt that their children’s needs were not fully met, particularly those whose child had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that both the provision for and the achievements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or the most able, to be excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lostock Hall Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 129 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	56	17	35	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	65	16	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	35	27	56	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	40	25	52	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	24	50	22	46	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	40	23	48	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	50	22	46	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	48	19	40	4	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	48	19	40	5	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	35	27	56	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	40	25	52	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	50	18	38	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	58	17	35	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



28 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lostock Hall Primary School, Stockport, SK12 1XG

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly to your school when I inspected it recently. You will know I visited to find out how good an education the school gives you. I can tell you that this is excellent.

The things I was most impressed with were:

- the high standards you reach and how quickly you make progress in your work
- that you grow into kind, well-behaved and responsible young people
- the exciting things you have to do in and out of lessons and the excellent way in which you are taught
- how safe you are and the way in which you are so well looked after
- the excellent way the school is run.

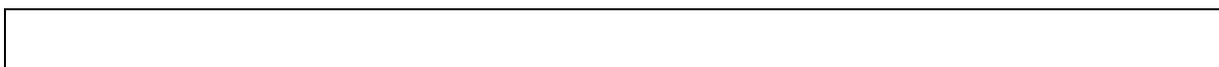
It is also part of my job to point out to the school any ways in which it could be better. There is one thing that I have asked your governors, headteacher and teachers to do. It is to make sure that you are given more opportunities to link up with other children and adults from different parts of the country and in other parts of the world. This is to help you to understand better the similarities and differences between groups of people.

Thank you again for your welcome. Keep on enjoying school and working hard!!

Yours faithfully

Paul Bamber

Lead Inspector



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