

Mablins Lane Community Primary School

Mablins Lane, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 3YR

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection. The process of eliminating ineffective teaching and strengthening the governing body has created turbulence and uncertainty. However, the school is now settled, and the quality of teaching and learning is improving.
- At the end of Years 6 and 2 in 2017, pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average. Various groups of pupils, including those eligible for support through additional funding, underachieved.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to boost pupils' progress. Too few pupils, including the most able, are challenged to achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Teachers are not consistent in their use of information on pupils' prior performance when planning teaching and learning activities. In addition, information presented to governors does not pin-point pupils' exact progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' appreciation of the culturally diverse nature of British society is still developing.
- Feedback to teachers about their lessons does not precisely indicate how they can improve their practice. Senior leaders do not check closely enough to see if all teachers consistently apply the school's feedback and assessment policy.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. For example, phonics is improving, as is pupils' writing and their understanding in science. Early years provision is good and rapidly improving.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils enjoy school. They are courteous, well-mannered and eager to learn.
- Sports funding is spent well to increase pupils' participation in a range of physical activities.
- Staff morale is high. Senior leaders, teachers and the rejuvenated governing body are well poised to move the school forward.
- Parents are positive about the school. They say their children are safe and progressing well.
- Pupils say they are well looked after. Most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, including their appreciation of British values, are strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to raise levels of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - making sure that teachers consistently challenge pupils of all abilities, including the most and least able, to achieve their absolute best
 - using information on pupils' past performance, including the outcomes from assessments, when planning teaching and learning activities
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are always used effectively to boost pupils' progress.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - providing precise analysis to teachers of how they can improve their practice
 - checking that teachers consistently apply the school's feedback and assessment policy
 - making sure that data presented to governors on pupils' performance precisely indicates how much progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics
 - developing pupils' awareness and appreciation of the culturally diverse nature of British society.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- After a prolonged period of turbulence and uncertainty in staffing, Mablins Lane has settled down. Senior leaders and governors have been decisive about rigorous recruitment and the selection of teachers with the qualities to accelerate pupils' progress.
- The senior leadership team is well established. Together with governors and staff, leaders are moving the school forward and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Senior leaders are developing the roles of middle leaders to ensure that they have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their various specialist areas. Middle leaders are beginning to work closely with senior leaders to evaluate the impact of the curriculum in engaging pupils and raising standards.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching. This is done through observations of teachers' practice, scrutinising the quality of work in pupils' books and checking on the quality of teachers' planning. However, monitoring is not sharp enough. This is because advice is not always clearly focused on what teachers need to do to improve.
- Senior leaders and teachers use sophisticated systems to track and monitor pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Those responsible for data analysis do not always present this information clearly to governors, so that they can quickly see where progress is being made and where groups of pupils need to catch up with their peers.
- Until recently, the school's use of additional funding, including for disadvantaged pupils, was not effective enough in raising standards for eligible pupils. Evidence, including the school's own assessment information, indicates that differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are rapidly diminishing. Additional funding for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. Pupils learn about the major world faiths and respect each other's views and beliefs. Pupils enjoy playing various musical instruments, including African drums, glockenspiel, keyboards and guitar. They produce art work, including poetry and pottery, of an exceptionally high standard and regularly visit museums, the theatre and local places of interest.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. Their knowledge and appreciation of the culturally diverse nature of British society is still developing. Pupils take their many responsibilities as school council leaders, eco team members and members of the safeguarding team seriously and execute their roles diligently. Last year, pupils raised £6,000 for charitable causes. The school choir is actively involved in various community events, including singing in the local church.
- The primary school sports fund is spent effectively, enabling the school to offer a wider range of sports, including football, basketball, gymnastics and dance. Funding has

increased pupils' participation in competitive sports and has helped to develop staff skills in teaching various sports and physical activities.

- Almost all parents who completed Parent View, sent in text messages and spoke with inspectors indicated that their children are safe and well looked after. All are of the view that the school is well led and managed and that behaviour is good. Parents are especially complimentary about the school's caring ethos and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has had targeted support from the local authority in recent years. The school also works with consultants, who have taken the lead on mathematics training and carried out a review of early years provision. Now that staffing is stable, training and support are proving effective in helping to raise standards.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been rejuvenated. Several new members have been elected, including the vice-chair, all of whom have a wealth of relevant experience to bring to their respective roles.
- The new governing body hit the ground running and has gathered momentum over the last 12 months. Governors have a clear strategic vision and are working towards, in their words, 'getting the school to good'.
- Governors know where the school's strengths lie. They also know where further improvements are needed. Governors know that standards have not been good enough historically and are fully aware that there is more to do to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors are trained well and have a high level of understanding and experience in education. All keep abreast of new developments in education and take advantage of training offered through local and regional training networks.
- Governors know how additional funding, including pupil premium funding, is spent and the positive impact this is having on improving standards for disadvantaged pupils. Governors support and challenge the headteacher appropriately in decisions about teachers' performance and progression.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters. They know precisely what to do if a pupil approaches them with a concern relating to their safety or welfare.
- Staff and governors are trained well and keep themselves up to date with the latest government guidance on keeping children safe in education. Staff take prompt action on safeguarding matters and work with a range of professionals. Designated safeguarding leaders have had enhanced training.
- The school's central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children is up to date and contains all the necessary information. This ensures that risks to pupils are minimised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is rapidly improving. However, it is variable and not consistently good across the school. All teachers, including those new to the profession, and teaching assistants, have received comprehensive, targeted training. This is helping to improve the quality of teaching.
- Some aspects of teaching are not strong enough to support pupils consistently to make up for learning lost as the result of weak teaching over time. Assessment information on pupils' performance is not always used systematically. This hampers teachers' accuracy in matching work to pupils' abilities. It is evident when activities in class do not meet the different skills and abilities of pupils, including those of the most and least able.
- Teaching assistants mostly work well in partnership with teachers to support pupils of all abilities. Some teaching assistants are not directly involved in planning teaching and learning activities. As a result, they are not as effective as they could be in boosting pupils' progress and developing their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Recent training has supported teachers and teaching assistants well and is improving their practice. Teachers have generated much interest and excitement in mathematics. Work in pupils' practical books shows that they now have many opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem-solving activities.
- Phonics teaching is rapidly improving. Teachers are trained well and take a consistent approach to helping pupils to use different strategies to learn to read unfamiliar words. Timely interventions are very effective in helping pupils to develop their confidence in reading.
- Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. As a result, the quality of pupils' writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling is improving.
- Good practice is beginning to emerge in enhancing pupils' writing skills. This was evident in a key stage 2 class where pupils were writing innovative texts by reimagining traditional fairy stories. The teacher praised pupils for their hard work and took the opportunity to point out good punctuation and effective use of alliteration and metaphors.
- Pupils' ability to listen carefully and follow instructions is good. This was shown in an upper key stage 2 class where pupils demonstrated their detailed knowledge of different musical notes and rhythms before singing 'Silent Night' in both English and German.
- Senior leaders have recently revised the school's feedback and assessment policy. While most teachers adhere to this, there is a lack of consistency when offering pupils advice on their work. As a result, too few pupils have a precise understanding of what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy welcoming visitors into the school and talking about their learning. Pupils' knowledge of what they need to do to improve their learning is developing. Pupils are becoming more resilient and are beginning to take risks, experiment with ideas and learn from their mistakes. Pupils who spoke with inspectors indicated that bullying is rare. Older pupils' understanding of racism and homophobic behaviour is developing. After a discussion on these matters, all pupils agreed that discriminatory behaviour does not take place at school.
- Pupils regularly participate in various sporting and physical activities, including football, basketball, dance and gymnastics. They understand that healthy eating and regular exercise keep the mind and body healthy and active.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet. They understand that cyber-bullying can take place on any electronic device that can be used online. They know not to visit chat rooms or join social media groups without consulting their parents first. Pupils know that they should never give out personal information to strangers or share passwords and email addresses.
- Various visitors from the fire, police and social services help pupils to understand dangers and risks. They host discussions on road safety, the potential danger of fireworks and what to do in the event of a fire.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and confident to talk to any member of staff if they have any concerns. Those who spoke with inspectors indicated that they can use a worry box. All pupils know who safeguarding leaders are.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. This they do in earnest as members of the school council, sports council and eco team. Recently, the pupil safeguarding team handed out special parking tickets to drivers parked illegally outside the school. Such responsibilities are helping pupils to acquire and develop the perseverance, leadership skills and independence they need for the next stage of their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Mablins Lane is a calm and purposeful school where pupils want to learn. Their written work, art and sports trophies are celebrated, widely displayed and appreciated by all. Pupils take care of their spacious new school, including the surrounding play and wooded areas, and take pride in their appearance.
- Pupils behave sensibly when moving around the school between lessons and play safely during break- and lunchtimes. A very small minority of pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. However, staff have various effective strategies to help them manage their behaviour. School records show that behaviour has improved over

time and is now consistently good. Pupils follow the rules and aim to collect as many reward 'dojos' as possible. They can exchange these for books and other items.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They are attentive, respectfully listen to their peers' ideas, and are eager to answer questions. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work, as shown in their neat exercise books.
- Almost all parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, submitted text messages and spoke with inspectors, are of the view that behaviour is good, bullying rare and their children are safe. The school's own surveys of parents' views coincide with these findings, as do those of staff and governors.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming together for assemblies. This was evident during a key stage 1 assembly where pupils participated in a presentation on the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Despite the guest appearance of two bears, who generated lots of excitement, pupils contained themselves and demonstrated good discipline and self-control.
- Pupils are aware of the relationship between good attendance and good achievement. They enjoy competing for points and prizes for the best attendance and look forward to their weekly celebration assemblies. Pupils' attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is currently above average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement has declined since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in key stage 2, has not been good enough for the last three years. As a result, pupils have not attained the standards of which they are capable.
- Instability in teaching has had an adverse impact on pupils' outcomes. Until recently, teaching was not strong enough to make up for pupils' lost learning. However, the school is beginning to turn a corner, as shown by the much higher proportion of pupils currently achieving age-related expectations. Senior leaders and teachers are taking effective action; they are determined to support pupils to achieve their potential.
- Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2017 showed that pupils' progress from their different starting points in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mathematics was well below average, as was their attainment. Pupils' attainment in all subjects, except science, was also below average at the end of Year 2.
- National tests show that some gains were made by pupils in 2017. For example, outcomes improved for disadvantaged pupils and middle attainers in reading and for middle and higher attainers in writing at the end of key stage 1. At the end of Year 6, outcomes for all pupils in writing improved significantly, including the proportion achieving at greater depth. The proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in mathematics more than doubled.
- Despite such gains, the school is aware of the need to challenge its most able pupils. Currently, teachers do not consistently challenge such pupils to achieve to their absolute best.

- At the end of Year 6 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress was below average in all subjects. Few reached the standards expected for their age. Differences between their progress and that of other pupils nationally were diminishing too slowly until recently. Workbooks show that the current progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving across all classes, especially in reading. Effective training and professional development have resulted in much stronger teaching.
- So far this academic year, reading is the most improved subject. For example, most pupils in all classes are working at age-related expectations. A small proportion are working above age-related expectations. Senior leaders have raised the profile of reading across the curriculum. Pupils who read for inspectors were very proud of the number of books they had read. Lower ability pupils used their phonics skills well to sound out and read unfamiliar words.
- Teachers' assessments indicate that the quality of pupils' writing is marginally stronger in Years 1 and 6, but improving across the school. Pupils' books show that although standards are inconsistent, progress is increasing.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving. Many now make faster progress, especially in developing their calculation and problem-solving skills. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is not as rapid as it should be because, too often, activities planned by teachers are not hard enough. Workbooks show that pupils of different abilities are usually given the same work. As a result, too few pupils attain the necessary depth of understanding to attain highly in mathematics.
- At the end of Year 1 in 2017, a below-average proportion of pupils were secure in their phonics skills and knowledge at the national screening check. Outcomes in phonics have improved each year for the last three years. The school's own data indicates that the majority of pupils in Year 1 have already acquired the skills necessary to be secure at the next phonics check in the summer term.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Quite correctly, parents are highly positive about the support their children receive and the progress they make. The special educational needs coordinator is trained well and works in partnership with various specialists to ensure that pupils, including those who have education, health and care plans, get the support they need.
- Stability in teaching is helping to raise levels of achievement, including in subjects such as science and history. So far this year, a much higher proportion of pupils than in 2016 and 2017 are prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary for the next stage of their learning in Year 7.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of the early years is good. Outcomes for children in the Reception classes have improved year-on-year for the last four years. This is the result of close tracking of children's progress, good teaching and some recent improvements to provision, including the remodelled outdoor area.
- The school's own baseline assessment information indicates that children enter the Reception classes with weak skills in some areas of learning. However, they make good

progress during their time in early years. A broadly average proportion of children attain a good level of development and are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for their learning in Year 1.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. An increasing number of children speak English as an additional language. The early years leader ensures that the needs of these children are well met.
- Children's learning journeys confirm that almost all make good progress during their time in early years. Interesting activities have enabled staff to minimise gaps between the performance of boys and girls in areas such as reading and writing. These are now no different to those found nationally. Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used effectively. For example, tailored one-to-one support and enhanced phonics training have helped staff to accelerate disadvantaged children's performance.
- Staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn, and make sure that both indoor and outdoor provision is exciting, stimulating and clearly linked to the different areas of learning. Continuous professional development, visits to other settings, regular 'drop ins' and observations of teaching have helped staff to develop good practice.
- Children are well motivated and well behaved. They enjoy playing and sharing together, exploring the properties of water and sand, counting and measuring, finding geometric shapes, balancing and playing with wheeled toys, creating works of art and engaging in role play in the post office.
- Children listen carefully. They are very responsive towards each other and adults but also enjoy working independently. This was demonstrated when some children practised their spelling, while others learned to use commas and finger spaces in their writing.
- Parents are highly positive about their children's safety and progress. Opportunities are available for parents to get involved in their children's education at school through reading and writing workshops, stay and make sessions and phonics activities. Early years staff are currently exploring ways to encourage parents to record their children's developments at home on the school's new assessment system.
- Staff look after children well, making sure that all welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding is effective. The same well established procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are in operation in the early years provision.

School details

Unique reference number	111216
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10037753

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	551
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Hennessy-Jones
Headteacher	Justine Joule
Telephone number	01270685085
Website	http://www.mablinslaneschool.co.uk
Email address	head@mablinslane.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staffing changes. Up to 12 teachers, and three teaching assistants, have been appointed. Some teachers are newly qualified, and others have recently started their second year of teaching. Over the last two years, the senior leadership team has been consolidated and extended. The governing body has been reorganised and includes several new members, including the vice-chair.
- An extensive long-term building project was completed for the start of this academic year. New facilities include an extension to the school hall, the removal of portable classrooms and the addition of five new classrooms, multi-use games pitch and sports facilities, forest school area and meeting rooms. The early years provision has been developed to include a fully remodelled outdoor learning and play area.

- Mablins Lane is a larger than average-sized three form entry primary school. A below-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and in receipt of support through pupil premium funding.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A small but increasing number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans or a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- All children in the Reception classes attend full-time.
- The school runs breakfast and after school clubs. These are managed by an external provider and did not form part of the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has received extensive support from the local authority and independent consultants.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils learn to read. Four observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors read 58 text responses submitted by parents during the inspection and met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff and 49 pupils were also considered.
- A meeting was held with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were held with various leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for assessing pupils' learning and progress, the early years provision and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's checks on the quality of teaching and reviews of its own performance, development plans, information about pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Pennington	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Stevens	Her Majesty's Inspector

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