

Lache Primary School

Hawthorn Road, Lache, Chester, Cheshire CH4 8HX

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2019

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

- Lache Primary School has improved since the previous inspection. Senior leaders and governors work together effectively to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are good.
- Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They support and challenge senior leaders and contribute to the school's ongoing development.
- Teachers make the curriculum interesting and exciting, helping to harness pupils' imagination and secure their good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching in the resources base, The Willows, is good. Staff are caring and have an in-depth understanding of pupils' personal, social and educational needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and make strong progress.
- Pupils' knowledge of different authors and writing styles is not as comprehensive as it could be. Opportunities to read for pleasure are limited.
- Pupils, especially the most able, are not fully challenged in English and mathematics. As a result, some pupils do not achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- Current pupils in key stage 2, including disadvantaged pupils, are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, pupils attained highly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In sport, pupils enjoy football, netball and judo and compete successfully in inter-school competitions.
- Senior leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding effectively. However, pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is not as well developed.
- The learning environment in the early years has improved, teaching is good, and children make strong progress. However, outdoor areas are not used effectively to enhance children's learning and stimulate their interests.
- Most parents are positive about the school. They indicate that their children are happy, safe and making good progress.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils' behaviour is good, and their attendance is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to further raise standards, particularly in key stage 2, by:
 - providing greater levels of challenge, especially for the most able, to improve the fluency and accuracy of pupils' writing
 - enhancing pupils' depth of understanding in mathematics
 - extending pupils' enthusiasm for reading by widening their reading repertoire and appreciation of the work of different authors.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance by further enhancing pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity in British society.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision by making more effective use of the outside areas to stimulate children and provide more learning and playing choices.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Strong and ambitious leadership has moved the school forward. Senior leaders have been successful in resolving most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Most notably, they have introduced, and embedded, comprehensive systems for assessing and monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils. This has been pivotal in improving progress as pupils now receive the help they need.
- In addition, the school has appointed a pupil premium champion, also the deputy headteacher. The deputy monitors the use of additional funding and ensures that the personal, social and educational development of disadvantaged pupils remains firmly on the agenda of governors, teachers and other staff. Funding is used effectively and is helping to diminish the differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Senior leaders make sure that additional funding to raise standards for SEND pupils is used effectively, ensuring that such pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Morale is high, especially among middle leaders, most of whom are subject specialists. Leaders play a central role in improving the quality of teaching. They talk to pupils about their learning and assess the quality of work in pupils' books. Leaders say that the training and development they receive is plentiful and is improving their specialist knowledge and leadership skills. They have gained consistency in the quality of teaching, although aspects, including challenging the most able, are still developing.
- Pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum, which promotes their skills in writing, mathematics, information and communication and design technology. Teachers combine subjects under different themes, which helps pupils to appreciate that no subject exists in isolation. This is evident in pupils' topic books which cover areas such as South American culture. As part of this topic, pupils recently put their research skills to good effect, when they explored the geography, food, art, history, politics and commerce of various countries.
- Senior leaders' work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have raised money for various worthy causes, including children's and cancer research charities. Pupils are aware of the major world faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism and like to celebrate various events such as Yom Kippur, Advent and Eid Ul Fatr. Pupils regularly visit local places of interest. They enjoy participating in the school's steel band, playing percussion instruments and singing. However, pupils' understanding and appreciation of the cultural diversity which extends beyond their community is limited.
- The physical education and sport funding is spent successfully to develop the skills of staff in teaching various sporting activities. Funding is used to raise the profile of sport within school. The achievements of sporting role models are celebrated alongside acknowledging pupils who demonstrate good sporting performance and perseverance. Most pupils regularly participate in sporting activities including football, netball, rugby, judo, multisport, running, fencing and badminton.

- Parents and carers who met with inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. A small core of parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and submitted text messages during the inspection were less positive, especially about behaviour. The majority of parents, including those who completed the school's own surveys, are of the view that their children are happy, safe and making good progress at school. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are safe in school, and their behaviour is good
- Historically, the local authority and independent consultants have provided a high level of support to the school. More recently, as the school has improved, support has lessened. Regular reviews have been carried out to establish the quality of teaching and learning. Useful advice has been provided to the school, which has helped to secure improvements. Senior leaders have visited schools in similar areas outside the local authority. Leaders work closely with IGNITE (Teaching School Alliance) to ensure that the school's focus remains steadfastly on high-quality staff training and learning from best practice.
- Pupils have a good understanding and appreciation of British values. For example, they know that it is important to be fair, respectful to others and obey the law. Pupils observe World Refugee Day, Saint David's, Andrew's, George's and Patrick's Day, Burns Night and Chinese New Year. They are aware of social problems such as homelessness and know of important commemorative days, such as Armistice Day.

Governance of the school

- Governors have much experience to bring to the school; many have extensive experience of working in education at senior leadership level. Other governors bring their knowledge and understanding of the community to their respective roles. Governors receive comprehensive reports from senior leaders. They know where the school's strengths lie as well as what needs to be done to improve further.
- Governors welcomed the recent pupil premium review, carried out after the previous inspection, regarding it as a useful tool for assessing the school's performance. Governors know that disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving.
- Governors have clearly defined roles. They have a good understanding of performance data and information and ask pertinent questions in relation to pupils' progress. Governors have specific responsibilities in areas including early years, special educational needs and safeguarding. They come into school regularly to meet with staff and talk to pupils about their learning.
- New governors have participated in a local authority induction programme, in preparedness for their role. Governors are of the view that the quality of teaching is good. Their views are informed by first-hand experiences in school and regular analysis of performance data.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Many pupils at the school are potentially very vulnerable, requiring the school to be especially vigilant when it comes to safeguarding. All staff know precisely what to do if they have an issue or concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. Their safeguarding training is current. All staff are familiar with the government's latest guidelines on keeping children safe in education and all have had 'Prevent' duty training, which is part of the government's strategy to tackle radicalisation and extremism.
- Senior leaders, including the headteacher and family support worker, have completed higher-level training suitable to their roles
- The single central record is well maintained and regularly updated. All staff have been subject to relevant checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. All staff, volunteers and other adults who regularly come into the school have completed safeguarding awareness training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have established consistency in approaches, and this has secured good-quality teaching across subjects and years. Most teachers and teaching assistants routinely use data and information on pupils' past performance to plan lessons which ensure pupils' good progress. Teachers are increasingly focusing on developing pupils' resilience, so that they are confident to try harder work and learn from their mistakes.
- New approaches to teaching writing are reaping rewards. Teachers now make writing more exciting for pupils. Recently, pupils engaged in an initiative with Chester Zoo. Linked to the project, pupils have written interesting factual texts on the impact of the production of palm oil on animal habitats in the Amazon and the migration of displaced farmers. Such initiatives are securing pupils' engagement and improving their grammar, punctuation and spelling,
- Mathematics teaching is good. The new mathematics programme, recently introduced in Year 5, is beginning to bear fruit. For example, Year 5 pupils were asked to work out common factors in different two- and three-digit numbers. They were then challenged to answer questions such as, 'Do even numbers always have an odd number of factors?' Pupils realised how difficult this question was when they were asked to prove their answers. Such activities are starting to challenge pupils and develop their mathematical thinking.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils are interested in learning and engaged in class. Inspection evidence indicates that while activities are becoming increasingly challenging in mathematics, they are not always challenging enough. Similarly, pupils' writing is much improved. However, pupils' writing fluency is sometimes lacking. A sizable proportion of pupils in Years 4 to 6 who completed the inspection questionnaire said that learning was challenging only in some lessons. This was evident during the inspection.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. Teaching is planned with precision and pupils build on what they already know. Typically, pupils identify sounds correctly and quickly learn to blend them together to read and spell words. Timely support from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that no pupil is left behind.

- Reading in class is a regular part of the curriculum. Group reading records show that pupils have good comprehension skills. They identify and draw key information from factual texts and discuss the themes and motivation of characters in different books. However, not enough attention is given to reading for pleasure or to introducing pupils to a wide range of styles and authors to capture their enthusiasm for reading.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils in the resources base, The Willows. They are familiar with each pupil's learning and development needs and have clear expectations of their behaviour. This was evident as pupils used scissors safely to create lanterns as part of their Chinese New Year celebrations. Pupils have good information, communication and technology skills, which they demonstrated as they prepared presentations on internet safety. Staff focus on developing pupils' communication skills, manners and ability to cooperate with their peers. This work is paying off, as pupils become increasingly confident in their own abilities.
- Teachers respond to pupils' work in line with the school's feedback and assessment policy. This helps ensure that most pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their learning in different subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly resilient. This is evident in Year 5, where a growing proportion of pupils are increasing challenging themselves to attempt difficult work in mathematics. Pupils are developing their confidence in their own abilities and seeking support from teachers less frequently.
- Pupils are developing their discipline and determination to succeed. This was evident during the inspection in the excellent musicianship and confident performance of the steel pan orchestra.
- Pupils in all classes and Reception children share their views through the democratically elected pupils' parliament. Parliamentarians have the task of presenting information to senior leaders about the views of their peers to make the school a better place. Recently, the parliament put forward a plan to make lunch- and breaktimes more interesting, through providing a wider range of games and activities. Suggestions were accepted by senior leaders, who are planning to provide a wider range of breaktime activities.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare, and staff always deal with it effectively. Pupils are confident in reporting any concerns to staff, secure in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Pupils say that racism is when, '...someone with a different skin colour, language or religion is made fun of'. They are adamant that there is no racism or homophobic bullying in school.
- Pupils were focusing on internet safety during the inspection. They are aware of cyber bullying and know that they should not succumb to pressure to provide personal information to others on the internet. Pupils in The Willows say that if they attract unwanted attention on the internet they should, '...tell people to go away'.

- Visitors from various police, fire and community services attend assembly and lessons to talk up pupils about safe and unsafe situations. This helps to enhance pupils' understanding of potential dangers and risks in school and the community.
- Pupils know that regular exercise and a healthy diet are important. They make healthy choices from the school menu and participate in many PE activities, although choices they make from their packed lunches are not always healthy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy welcoming visitors into the school and are proud of their achievements. During the inspection, unprompted, pupils were eager to talk to inspectors about their school. Pupils ensure that the school environment is well looked after, they move around safely and with due consideration for their peers. Pupils behave sensibly during lunch- and breaktimes. Those who spoke with inspectors indicated that these times were usually peaceful and without disruptive events. Pupils' good behaviour contributes towards the calm and purposeful nature of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in class is good. If pupils lose concentration, teachers and teaching assistants soon ensure that pupils pay attention and focus on their learning. A small minority of pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. On such occasions, staff adhere to the school's policy for managing poor behaviour.
- Most staff who completed the inspection survey are of the view that behaviour is good and consistently well managed. Most parents, and all governors, are also of this view. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour is good most of the time, and when pupils break the rules they say that 'teachers handle it'. Pupils behave well because they value merit points and want to learn. Inspection evidence, including behaviour logs, indicate that behaviour is typically good over time.
- Behaviour in The Willows can vary, given the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils. However, staff are exceptionally well trained to manage all situations. They know pupils well and are expert at identifying 'flashpoints', to which they apply a range of effective de-escalation procedures. During the inspection pupils' behaviour was good, as they listened carefully to staff and talked to inspectors about their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average and improving. Celebration assemblies and rewards for good attendance are having a positive impact on ensuring regular attendance. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored. Where there are concerns, immediate action is taken. Pupils and parents know that good attendance is essential to learning success. Leaders, including the learning mentor and family support worker, work closely with a small core of families where persistent absence is high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In Lache Primary School, each class includes a high proportion of pupils with SEND. Inspection evidence indicates that such pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, their

attainment, while improving, is low. The high number of pupils with SEND, especially in key stage 1, can affect national data and must be treated with caution. For example, when performance data is disaggregated, a much higher than average proportion of pupils attained at the expected standard in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2018. In addition, a higher than average portion attained greater depth in reading.

- The results of national tests in 2018 show a rising trend in pupils' progress, with a significant leap in pupils' attainment between 2017 and 2018, edging outcomes ever closer to the national average.
- In Lache School, standards are improving and are better than at the time of the previous inspection. Inspection evidence, including the school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books, indicates that pupils currently on roll are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Outcomes in phonics are improving because teachers and teaching assistants are taking a consistent approach to developing pupils' phonics skills and knowledge. A below-average proportion of pupils was secure at the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2018. Now in Year 2, those not secure at the check are receiving targeted support. Pupils' progress in reading is good. However, not all read for pleasure, or show enthusiasm for different styles of books and popular authors,
- At the end of Year 6 in 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics and reading was average and below average in writing. However, performance differences are diminishing. Good teaching and timely support, delivered by skilled teaching assistants, ensure that currently most pupils are making the same strong progress as their peers in a wide range of subjects.
- Current pupils are making good progress in writing. This is evident in pupils' extended creative writing. Such writing gives teachers a good indication of the skills and abilities of individual pupils. Most pupils' workbooks show examples of well-written letters and persuasive writing. However, the level of challenge is sometimes lacking, especially for the most able. As a result, their writing is not always as accurate or fluent as it could be.
- Progress in mathematics is good. Teachers' good subject knowledge is helping to develop pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills. Pupils in key stage 1 show confidence when applying their calculation skills to problem-solving activities. However, older pupils' depth of understanding in mathematics is not as strong and is still developing.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. They benefit from a range of tailored interventions which support their good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is experienced and trained well. She works closely with parents and different partners, including speech and language therapists, to ensure that pupils' learning needs are met.
- Pupils attending The Willows make good progress. Those confident enough to talk to adults are keen to share their work, because they are proud of their achievements. Pupils regularly engage in reading. They use their phonics skills effectively to sound out and read unfamiliar words. Some pupils have poor reading and calculation skills, having missed significant periods of learning. However, targets in their education, health and

care (EHC) plans are precise, helping to focus on the key skills needed to overcome barriers to their learning. Pupils are making strong progress towards reaching these targets.

- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make good progress in a wide range of additional subjects, including science, history, geography, art, design technology and computing. The school's effective approach to developing pupils' appreciation of these and other subjects, through thematic work and various projects, is helping to harness pupils' creativity and hone their spelling, grammar, punctuation and calculation skills.

Early years provision

Good

- All aspects of the leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Staff are trained well, form strong bonds with children and make sure that learning is interesting and engaging. Staff look after children well, making sure that all welfare requirements are met.
- The school's own records show that children's skills on entering school are below those typically found for their age. Their speaking and listening skills are particularly weak. Although the number of pupils attaining a good level of development in 2018 was below the national average, it represents a rising trend. The proportion of children ready for their learning in Year 1 has increased each year for the last four years.
- Inspection evidence, including the school's own data and information in children's workbooks, indicates that in 2018 most children made good progress, particularly in developing their reading, writing, calculation and interpersonal communication skills. Regular assessments of the different abilities and needs of children, especially those with SEND and disadvantaged children, lead to different well-planned activities which help to ensure that these children make the same good progress as their peers.
- Teaching is effective, including in phonics. In the Reception class, children learn in different groups according to their ability. Children are used to the daily phonics routine. The most able confidently 'chop and punch' and sound out words such as 'June', 'jelly', and 'jam', while other less confident children turn over cards to identify and sound out words such as 'get' and 'pet'.
- Children are calm and well behaved in the Nursery class. They enjoy initiating activities, such as weighing and measuring, role-play, reading and investigating the 'small world'. Children like to paint, they enhance their creativity during 'outside painting', where they use a variety of brushes to hone their fine motor skills and artistry. Children enjoy working in the outdoor construction den. They refine their balancing and coordination skills on various wheeled toys, which they drive safely. Outdoor areas have improved, although they are not used to stimulate learning as effectively as indoor areas.
- In the Reception class, staff encourage children to socialise with their friends during snack time and brush up on their dining etiquette. In role, they like to serve crackers, cheese, apples and milk. Teachers ensure that children regularly practise formulating letters on the writing table. In the 'magic maths' area, children are encouraged to use number puppets to aid their counting and sorting skills.
- All parents who spoke with inspectors were positive about all aspects of the early years provision. They appreciate the school's open-door policy and opportunities to engage in

stay and play activities and phonics workshops. Typically, parents say that their children are safe, well looked after and making good progress.

- Safeguarding is effective. The same well-established procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are reflected in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	131350
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10057934

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Clark
Headteacher	Robert Pullen
Telephone number	01244 981333
Website	www.lache.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@lache.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2016

Information about this school

- Lache Primary School is an average-sized school. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above average. Up to 80% of pupils in some classes are supported through pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average, as is the number of pupils with EHC plans.
- The school operates a resource base called The Willows, for pupils who have a range of special educational needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. At the time of the inspection, there were nine pupils in the resource base, all have EHC plans. Those attending the resource base are from across the local authority and further afield.
- The school experiences high levels of mobility, with pupils starting and leaving the schools at times other than the beginning of the academic year. Immediately prior to the inspection up to 20 pupils left the school. Up to a fifth of pupils currently in the

school joined in the last year. A larger than average proportion of pupils is from different Traveller communities.

- Almost all pupils are of White British origin, very few speak English as an additional language.
- All children in the Reception class attend full time. Children attend the Nursery class on a full- or part-time basis.
- Leaders work closely with IGNITE (Teaching School Alliance) for training and professional development purposes.
- Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured to include a new deputy headteacher. In addition, there have been several staffing changes, including the appointment of two teachers. The governing body has been reorganised to include several new governors, including the chair of the governing body.

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.
- Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in The Willows.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors read five text responses submitted by parents during the inspection and met informally with parents.
- Inspectors considered 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 26 members of staff and 35 pupils were also considered, as were the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views.
- Meetings were held with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting was held with the local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with various school leaders, including those responsible for English, mathematics, science and design technology. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for the early years provision, The Willows, provision for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. A meeting was held with the learning mentor and family support worker.
- 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. Various external reports on the school's effectiveness were examined.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Aspinwall	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector

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