



School Inspection Report

Lister School

BFPO 15

Inspection dates: Tuesday 30th September and Wednesday 1st October 2014

Overall effectiveness

Previous inspection:	Good	2
This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Early Years (Foundation Stages 1 & 2) develop their basic skills very well and make good progress. They are confident and enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils achieve well; those who have been at the school two or more years make particularly good progress and the proportion of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 who attain the standards expected for their age is above average in almost all areas.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and their very positive attitudes to learning make a considerable contribution to their good progress.
- The school's curriculum provides a rich and stimulating context for learning and enables pupils to apply their skills in mathematics and literacy.
- The attractive and well-maintained learning environment in all areas of the school reinforces teachers' expectations of quality and of pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Most of the improvements identified by the last inspection in 2011 have been achieved; improvements in curriculum have been especially effective. Further improvement in marking remains a priority for the senior leadership team.
- Transition arrangements for pupils are managed sensitively and with care, so that moving on and moving schools is a positive experience.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team lead a strong drive for improvement. They track the progress of pupils carefully to ensure that pupils get additional help and support if they are falling behind.

The inspectors agree with the school's leadership team that, although good and improving, the school is not yet outstanding, because:

- Teaching across the school is not yet consistently good in all year groups, particularly for some pupils in lower Key Stage 2.
- Further improvement is required in writing for some middle and higher attaining boys.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two days in September and October 2014. The school provided a comprehensive self-evaluation which was reviewed before the visit. Records of the school's monitoring of pupils' progress and of teaching and learning were examined.
- Inspectors observed parts of lessons in all classes across the school, with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors visited assembly, interviewed pupils and looked at a large sample of books and records from pupils of all ages.
- Discussions were held with all members of the senior leadership team and evaluations of observed teaching and learning were shared. A meeting took place with the chair of the School Governance Committee. The headteacher and deputy-headteacher joined the inspectors for the final meeting to consider judgements against the Ofsted evaluation schedule for inspecting schools in England.
- The two inspectors are Ofsted-experienced inspectors employed by Service Children's Education.

Inspection Team

Mike Chislett (lead)
Brenda Titley

Link Inspector Adviser
Link Inspector Adviser

Full Report

Information about the school

- Lister School is situated within Wentworth Barracks and serves the British military community in Herford. When inspected, the school had 216 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11. Although most children are White British and speak English as their first language, a significant number (52 children) speak other first languages.
- The school has a slightly higher proportion of pupils with additional needs or vulnerabilities than is average for Service Children's Education (SCE) in Germany, totalling approximately one in seven of the pupil population.
- Pupil mobility is very high compared to schools in England and in line with that in other SCE schools in Germany. Lister will close in July 2015 in line with the British military leaving Herford and pupil numbers have fallen by approximately a fifth since the previous term. The two main 'parent units' (1ADSR and 1HQ Division) move to Stafford and York respectively.
- 52 children currently have a parent deployed in Afghanistan and the school provides additional support for them through the 'Deployment Club' in a dedicated area of the school.
- Mobility among the 'dependent' staff has been high in recent months, affecting Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) practitioners, learning support assistants (LSAs) and administrative staff.
- Due to promotion and movement out of school, the deputy head and key stage leaders have only been in their current roles since January 2014.
- The school has previously achieved the Arts Mark Silver, the Eco School Award and Healthy Schools status. During the last academic year, the school achieved Primary Science Quality Mark at Silver level.
- The school provides extended day care (EDC) for FS1 children from 1145-1500hrs.
- In 2014 the school exceeded the government's floor standards for attainment, which set out the minimum outcomes expected of pupils by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that actions being taken to rectify the few remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are successful.
- Following the successful trial, implement the revised marking and feedback policy across all classes in key stages 1 and 2, so that the quality of marking in pupils' books is consistent.
- Ensure that the high standards demonstrated by pupils in their work at the end of last year are maintained and used to inform next steps in their learning.

The inspectors note that all these improvements are already being undertaken.

Leadership and Management are good

The senior leadership team (SLT) was largely reformed in January 2014 as a result of promotions within the school; consequently most post-holders have been in their present job for less than a year. This is not apparent from their shared commitment and drive for excellence in achieving the best for the children during Lister School's final year. The capacity for continued improvement in Lister School is strong and there is no evidence of any diminished ambition as the school prepares for closure in July 2015.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a very strong lead that ensures that the learning needs of every child is considered and, with equal commitment, sets out to make sure that they are met. The school's strong academic results, high quality pastoral care and maintenance and further improvement of teaching, bear testament to this. Most teaching is good or outstanding. Where it is not yet consistently good, it is improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring and effective performance management. The school has a deservedly strong track record in ensuring successful professional development for newly qualified teachers.

Self-evaluation by the SLT, and led by headteacher and deputy headteacher, is accurate and self-critical; it provides a clear 'no holds barred' basis for continued improvement. Inspectors agree with the SLT that subject leadership needs further support and development in order to ensure that expectations across all areas are maintained in the school's final year.

Effective systems are in place to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils as they move through the school, including those with additional needs.

Lister School's curriculum is planned as a series of whole school topics, designed so that work in all subjects can be brought to life as vividly as possible. This supports a context in which writing and mathematics have a clear purpose for pupils, increasing motivation for both boys and girls in these subjects. For example, 'Dead Famous' in Autumn 2014 involved older pupils in breaking wartime codes using algebra, and the youngest testing house construction in strong winds to keep the Big Bad Wolf at bay. The *launch* and *landing* of each term's theme are landmarks for the whole school community. Combined with the school's tradition of hosting joint events for neighbouring SCE schools, such as 'Lister Races' and 'Lister Dance Festival', the curriculum has a very positive impact on all aspects of pupils' achievement, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The School Governance Committee plays an active part in the work of the school and provides important support and useful challenge to the headteacher. A Transition Committee has been established to support the movement of pupils to Stafford and York.

Lister School's support for pupils and families on the move is very good and continues to develop. The school's 'welcome and departure' board provides individual move-histories to enable personal connection and sharing of information for others. Older pupils, who had recently arrived, explained to inspectors how they had been welcomed and why they felt 'at home' so quickly. The school is piloting 'leaving books' to support transfer to new schools. Links with schools in Stafford and York are being sought in order to encourage staff to visit ahead of pupil transfer.

The school meets requirements for safeguarding and works closely with garrison and British Forces Germany (BFG) services in order to support children and families when there is a need.

Behaviour and Safety are outstanding

Overall, behaviour and safety are judged to be outstanding. In almost all lessons pupils display a strong desire to learn and enjoy doing so. Their very good learning behaviours are reinforced in the most effective lessons which ensures that time is fully devoted to stretching pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Just occasionally, when the work set is too easy, or the teacher's expectations demand too little, pupils are not able to engage as fully as they could, despite their strongly positive attitudes.

Pupils are courteous, polite, considerate and helpful around the school. They collaborate well from youngest to eldest, whether in the playground or in class. A whole-school 'values assembly' during the inspection demonstrated the mutual respect that pupils show for each other and for staff. This was evident in the quality of reflection achieved when the lights were dimmed and a candle burned. This assembly was further enhanced by the high quality singing and 'professionalism' of the mixed aged children's choir that accompanied entry and exit.

Pupils report that they feel safe at school and this is evident in the positive manner in which different ages interact. Year 5 and Year 6 children take on roles as 'playground buddies' and support play with younger children. They are helped in these roles by training from the school's Learning Mentor. Bullying is very rare and pupils are confident that any such incidents would be swiftly and effectively dealt with. There have been no exclusions or reported bullying incidents in the past twelve months.

The school provides very good support for pupils and their families, where required, in order to ensure that pupils have every opportunity and reason to behave at their best. This is shown by records of multi-agency working to provide wider support and the very strong 'nurture group' arrangements in school. In these sessions, skilled and suitably trained learning support assistants provide high quality group work; this has a significant impact on pupils who find it difficult to deal with and express emotions.

The school has ensured that pupils are taught to be safe on-line. The schools' renowned high quality residential experiences are safely planned and carried out in line with SCE's guidance. Good attendance is meticulously supported and as a result attendance rates compare favourably with similar schools in Service Children's Education.

The quality of teaching is good.

The senior leaders evaluate teaching as good overall and the inspectors agree.

Most teaching in the school is good and a growing proportion is outstanding. Where teaching sometimes falls short of the school's exacting standards, carefully tailored support and coaching is provided to ensure that the quality of learning that pupils experience remains high.

Teachers and Learning Support Assistants work hard to make lessons as interesting as possible and to ensure that activities relate to each term's themes and topics. The school's

richly creative curriculum contributes much to the high quality of learning. This is further supported by a carefully maintained environment in corridors and classrooms that celebrates success and encourages questioning and inquiry.

In all parts of the school, teachers build in opportunities for pupils to use a variety of learning styles. Activities are designed to be as practical as possible, so that skills of literacy and numeracy are extended through a real or convincingly simulated purpose. Examples enjoyed during the inspection included children in Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) writing notices to inhibit the Big Bad Wolf and children in FS2 engaged in high quality discussion while testing houses made of bricks, mortar, sticks and straw against the wolf's (hair-dryer powered) enormous 'puff'. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils learned about algebra and the use of brackets and integers while solving codes 'taken from an enemy spy' in World War 2.

In the most effective lessons teachers strike a careful balance between questioning and intervention to extend pupils' learning and giving them time to think, discuss and explore. In these lessons pupils are completely engaged by the tasks in hand and the teachers' own enjoyment and passion for learning is equally evident.

These very successful lessons are under-pinned by skilful planning for the range of learners in each class. Insightful intervention during lessons ensures that teaching is adjusted to take account of all pupils' varying understanding and deal with any misconceptions. A remaining weakness in teaching in a few classes occurs when teachers do not pick up fast enough on these aspects. The senior leadership team and other colleagues support all teachers in improving their skills in this regard, and this mutual support has been a key factor in eliminating any teaching that is inadequate.

Marking of work provides valuable feedback to pupils. The school has been piloting approaches to improve this further and ensure a consistent method across the school. The best examples include clear reinforcement of success and informative next steps for improvement. Pupils respond positively to such feedback with their own comments. Scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection showed that marking of this quality was not consistent in all classes. The school's leadership team has identified the need to share the best of the pilot approach across the school without delay.

Pupils with additional and special needs make the progress that they should in almost all areas; in Key Stage 2 it is often outstanding, where identification and support are especially effective.

Teaching assistants and additional part-time teachers make significant contributions to the quality of teaching and learning in all classes and to work across the school, such as Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) including transition. Visiting music and German teachers provide very good quality support in their subjects.

The achievement of pupils is good.

Many pupils join the school at different points in the year and during their schooling. Given their different starting points all pupils, including the very few with special educational needs, make at least expected progress, which is very often good and sometimes better. This is confirmed by an analysis of school data, a scrutiny of pupils' work and the outcomes of lesson observations conducted during the inspection.

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that the achievement of pupils is close to outstanding but that this needs to be sustained and accelerated for those few pupils whose attainment is below expectations for their age. Appropriate checks and support have been

put in place to ensure that this happens during the school's final year. The school has identified in particular that boys' attainment in reading and writing could be further improved across the school in order to match the overall levels achieved by girls.

Pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 attained well compared to all pupils in England in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys and girls both performed better than the national cohorts. Where matched data is available to compare pupils at the end of Year 6 with their scores in Year 2, it indicates that almost all pupils made at least two levels of progress (the national expectation) despite most moving schools, sometimes more than once.

94% of pupils in Year 1 exceeded the phonics threshold set nationally, including all the boys. This compares favourably with the national average of 74% in 2013. Pupils at the end of Year 2 also attained more highly than the averages for all pupils of their age in England across most areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils with special and additional educational needs make similar progress, given their starting points, to other pupils. This is because the quality of support is good and their progress is closely monitored by senior staff.

The early years provision is outstanding

In Early Years (EYFS), pupils' achievement overall has improved even further in the last two years and since the previous inspection in 2011. The EYFS Leader and her SLT colleagues self-evaluate the quality of provision rigorously in order to identify areas that could be further improved. Assessment data shows that the seven children (now in Y1) who went all the way through Lister's Early Years Foundation Stage made rapid progress. SCE's own analysis of Lister's EYFS indicates that the attainment gap between the lower performing children and the rest is closing faster at Lister than elsewhere.

Pupils make such good progress in the Early Years because they are taught well by a cohesive team who understand how children learn. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those in which children are encouraged to find out for themselves and to think creatively and imaginatively. The learning environment is constructed with care and imagination by teachers and key workers in order to provide meaningful activities for young children to talk and discuss, mark-make and write, count and construct, observe and draw. During the inspection, there were many clues that a Big Bad Wolf was lurking in school. Reading, writing, making and testing activities in order to protect the Three Little Pigs were given added urgency and realism as a result.

The strong emphasis on speaking and listening in a working context is a significant feature of this outstanding provision. Teachers and key workers intervene in children's play to good effect. They model the use of language well and introduce new vocabulary at every opportunity. Careful and subtle questioning promotes children's thinking and supports learning well.

The phase is very well managed by an experienced and enthusiastic leader. She is supported by talented colleagues whose equal enthusiasm and artful teaching sustains the high quality across the two years of provision. Parent involvement is given a high priority and the quality work produced through parent-partnership projects, such as 'Family Tree' show considerable evidence of parent enjoyment in their children's learning.

What Inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

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