

# Larkrise Primary School

Dorset Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 9UB

**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While pupils' progress and outcomes by the end of Year 6 improved considerably in 2012, and there is a trend of accelerating progress and improving achievement in Years 3 to 6, performance over time has been, and in some respects remains, inconsistent.
- Progress and attainment in writing across the school is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2, while satisfactory, is still not rapid enough, particularly in writing.
- There remain some inconsistencies in what teachers expect of pupils, how they manage their classes, and how they assess how well pupils are doing.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Declining results at the end of Year 2 were reversed in 2012, showing an upturn in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now making better progress as a result of increasingly effective teaching and more rigorous assessment.
- Enhanced support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has had a significant, positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils who receive additional funding do as well as the others because the money is well spent.
- Pupils are safe and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning and the management of teachers' performance are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors are relentlessly focused on improving pupils' achievement and their efforts are showing success.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, with the school’s middle and senior leaders and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documentation including records of the monitoring of teaching, the main school improvement plan, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and extracts from the school’s tracking of pupils’ progress. A scrutiny of pupils’ written work was also undertaken and inspectors listened to pupils reading.

## Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Larkrise is a smaller-than-average primary school. It shares a site with a nursery school and a children's centre, each of which is managed and inspected separately.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils with statements or at school action plus is much higher than is typically found.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school has recently gained Healthy Schools status and Get Set School awards.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that teaching enables pupils to make more consistently good progress by:
  - providing well-paced activities which challenge the full range of pupils, particularly the more able
  - securing consistency and accuracy in the assessment of pupils' attainment and understanding
  - establishing shared high expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' written work and a consistent approach to classroom management.
- Consolidate and improve pupils' achievement in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by:
  - rigorous monitoring to ensure that pupils' progress in writing is at least at the expected level year on year
  - implementing a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting
  - ensuring that staff are confident and accurate in their assessment of pupils' skills in writing
  - providing frequent planned opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter Reception with skills generally below those expected for their age. Although not all reach the levels expected by the end of the year, particularly in aspects of language and communication, both the experiences offered to children and the outcomes have improved so that children's progress is nonetheless good.
- While standards have fluctuated in past years, attainment by the end of Year 2 rose in 2012 and is now broadly average, although higher in reading and mathematics than in writing. This reflects effective interventions to raise the quality of teaching and assessment, in particular teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, in 2012, pupils made more rapid progress in reading than in writing.
- The dip in attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 in 2011 has been reversed. The deployment of pupil premium funding to staff training and more rigorous monitoring of progress are supporting significantly improved outcomes.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6, now broadly average overall, has also, over time, been inconsistent. This was particularly so for the Year 6 pupils in 2011. Robust action by school leaders ensured a considerable improvement in pupils' progress in 2012, so that progress in reading and mathematics was mostly good. However, across the school, some inconsistencies in progress remain, particularly in writing. The school does not have a systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting.
- Determined leadership has ensured that pupils' progress is improving rapidly. Many pupils are now working at levels close to those expected for their age. Pupils who entered Year 6 at the beginning of the current school year already have similar, broadly average, attainment levels to the Year 6 pupils who left the previous year.
- The school has improved the support offered to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and to those being supported by the pupil premium. Effective specialist training for teaching assistants, and a high level of accountability for the progress these pupils make, resulted in much improved progress in the past year. Overall, they make progress at least in line with that of other pupils, and often better.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- School leaders have rightly focused on the elimination of weak teaching, through setting clear targets for improvements in the practice of individual teachers. Greater consistency in classroom practice and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve have supported significantly improved progress in the last year, although there is further work to be done to embed high quality practice. Expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' written work, for example, are not yet high enough.
- In almost all lessons, relationships are good. Where learning is most effective, the pace of the lesson is brisk and assessment is used well to match work closely to pupils' needs and to establish what will engage their interest most successfully. This was evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on the application of subtraction methods to real-life problems where work was set at exactly the right level for each group of pupils, so that progress was brisk for all groups.

- In other, less effective lessons, the pace is sometimes too slow and work does not always sufficiently engage or challenge the most able pupils. Teachers do not always respond promptly or effectively enough when pupils' attention wanders.
- Pupils in the Reception class learn well because staff provide a wide range of well-planned activities. The successful induction programme has ensured that children are well prepared for school, settle quickly and sustain attention well. Effective intervention by adults ensures that children work cooperatively from the beginning and learn quickly.
- The teaching of reading is good in Years 1 and 2, and, consequently, progress has improved. Pupils receive a thorough grounding in recognising the sounds letters make. This systematic and effective practice is now moving through the school so that overall achievement in reading is at least satisfactory.
- While there is broad understanding amongst staff as to the implementation of assessment practice, some variation remains, for example in the use of individual targets, pupil self-assessment and the marking of pupils' work. Some staff provide guidance as to the next steps in learning and expect pupils to respond. Others do so to a lesser extent.
- The availability of support staff in the school has been boosted because of the relatively high number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. School leaders have ensured that all support staff are deployed to best advantage. Their work is mostly effective and has contributed to significantly improved progress by their targeted pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils engage readily in their learning, are well motivated and enjoy school. Most parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is good.
- School records indicate that exclusions have declined markedly and pupils confirm that the school is very calm. There are few recorded racist incidents or episodes of inappropriate behaviour and significant disruption of lessons is rare. Where these occur they are managed effectively. Pupils have confidence in the adults around them. The school has invested in the provision of counselling services, funded through available additional funds, for pupils who feel anxious.
- The school is a very inclusive community and provides for pupils with a wide range of needs. Pupils with statements of special educational needs or similar high level needs are supported very effectively.
- There are no current reports of bullying of any type. Pupils understand that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying, or in response to physical differences or gender orientation. However, they also feel that individuals are generally accepted for who they are.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported well by the school's input, and that of the local community police, on personal and internet safety.
- Attendance, historically low, is now broadly average. This represents a significant improvement. Persistent absence is now rare. Parents and carers are increasingly aware of the disadvantages which may accrue from excessive absence. Pupils generally arrive at school punctually.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The effective management team has successfully targeted long-standing weaknesses. As a result, expectations have risen and there is a rapid trend of improving progress across the school, particularly in reading. Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved and teachers are now highly committed. Although the impact of these changes has not yet fully worked through the school, pupils' learning has improved significantly in the last year.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. Although this is not explicitly recorded, the school clearly knows itself well and has a well-judged agenda for further improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and accurate.
- School leaders are consistently focused on improving the quality of teaching. Performance management is rigorous and provision for the professional development of all staff is good. Middle managers, including the co-ordinator of special educational needs, are very clear as to what needs to be done to sustain current improvements.
- The school has received effective and consistent support from its local authority and other external providers in recent years.
- Progress since the last inspection has been good, with all issues successfully tackled. Pupil numbers have risen. The school convincingly demonstrates that it currently has good capacity to improve.
- The school has prioritised curriculum development around the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics. There is limited evidence, however, to demonstrate the extent to which writing is used in subjects across the curriculum. There is evidence of high quality work in three-dimensional art structures in school display. Extra-curricular provision is good.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is effectively supported through collective worship and the religious education programme. Cultural awareness, hitherto a weakness, is now promoted satisfactorily through the curriculum, through charitable and well-established local church links. However, this remains a slightly weaker element of the school's provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - has a thorough understanding of the issues which have faced the school and have been closely involved in driving change
  - has a good understanding of school performance data and contributes to decisions about the deployment of funding, in particular the pupil premium, to raise pupils' achievement
  - ensures that safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
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	<p>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.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115035
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401484

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Hodson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janice Bulger
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 471654
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