

Great Linford Primary School

St Leger Drive, Great Linford, Milton Keynes, MK14 5BL

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Effective leadership by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the other senior leaders has secured pupils' good achievement and sustains the capacity to bring further improvement.
- The drive and ambition for improvement is shared by the whole school team and is well supported by the governing body.
- Teaching is typically good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress from their starting points. Teaching is even better on occasion when pupils are encouraged to talk with each other about how to improve their work.
- Progress is good and accelerating, especially in Years 1 and 2, because teachers are making sure that lessons more closely match the needs of the pupils in these classes.
- Pupils are polite and their behaviour is good. They welcome the opportunity to talk to visitors about their school and do so with great pride. They make it very clear how much they enjoy school and that it is because 'We have the best teachers who make learning fun'.
- Pupils enjoy school and contribute well to their learning. They engage fully in well-planned lessons, reflecting meaningfully about what they have learned and how they interact with each other.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the range of subjects.
- There is some inconsistency in how pupils are expected to respond to teacher's marking.
- Occasionally, higher ability pupils are not always given work that is hard enough to quicken their progress..

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with some pupils from Years 5 and 6, members of the governing body and members of the senior management team. In addition separate discussions were held with leaders responsible for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard children read and also observed morning playtime and lunch breaks
- Pupils' work was scrutinised including the 'Learning Journeys' of the youngest children. Displays around the school were also examined.
- The inspection team consulted 11 parents' and carers' responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection. They also examined 17 staff questionnaires.
- An inspector met some parents and carers informally at the start of the school day.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's data on pupils' progress, planning, school self-evaluation and monitoring documentation. Also records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were examined.
- The inspection looked in detail at the quality of teaching and how much progress the pupils make in each year group.

Inspection team

Anne Wesley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian McAllister

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average and there are at least 16 different languages represented by this group. Few pupils are at the early stages of speaking English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those who are eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage in one Reception class.
- A new deputy headteacher and two other senior leaders have been appointed over the past year.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring higher ability pupils are consistently challenged with work that always matches their potential
 - ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to respond to their teacher's marking in order to make improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Currently children enter school with skills and knowledge typically seen for their age, previously they were lower than might be expected. During their first year at school they make good progress, particularly in learning their letter sounds and using them in reading and writing.
- Teaching phonics (the link between letters and sounds) has a high priority in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2; as a result achievement is good and continues to improve. In the first national phonic screening check for six year olds held this year the results were well above the national average.
- Teachers continually check that pupils read regularly at home and at school and ensure books are changed frequently. As a result, good progress in reading continues throughout the school. The pupils' positive enthusiasm for reading is evident in all classes with pupils in Year 6 talking confidently about different types of books, explaining why they preferred certain authors and attaining above average reading skills.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points, especially during Years 3 and 4, in response to teachers' high expectations. The pupils' above average attainment at the end of Year 6 shows good achievement and reflects a sustained improvement in pupils' progress since the previous inspection.
- The best writing is done when pupils write about the things that interest them and in which they have the most knowledge. At times though, opportunities to further extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects are not always taken.
- Gaps in pupils' achievement are closing more quickly than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are making faster progress than they have in the past and those supported by pupil premium funding, particularly the group of girls in Year 6, demonstrate the positive impact of this support. Boys still do better than girls in mathematics, but both are making good progress and the gap is closing rapidly.
- Lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work also reflect the good progress of current pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those supported by pupil premium funding. Occasionally, higher ability pupils are not encouraged to achieve even more. For example, in some lessons all pupils revise work from previous lessons even though some have already secured the understanding to be moved more quickly on to the next stage.
- The school's accurate records of pupils' progress also show that improved learning and good progress is being sustained across the school. The teachers' thorough scrutiny of pupils' individual records during pupil progress meetings ensures that additional help is targeted to those who need it most. Governors also help to check that pupil premium funding is used effectively to promote pupils' progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good and shows a greatly improved picture since the previous inspection. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books also show that teaching has been typically good over time.
- Pupils engage well with their lessons and the good pace of the teaching ensures high levels of interest and engagement. Pupils respond positively to the interesting lessons and to the high expectations of their teachers. In the Reception class children were thrilled by exploring in a dark tent where their fascination with the dark and ideas about an occasional sparkling light greatly enhanced their vocabulary.
- Some of the best writing comes when teachers make good links across the curriculum; this was seen at its very best when pupils were writing very good biographies of Charles Dickens as part of their work on the Victorians. However, such development of the pupils' literacy skills, and their numeracy skills, across the wider curriculum is not a consistently strong feature in all

classes.

- An effective system for marking pupils' books is well established and used consistently throughout the school. Pupils also use it well when they evaluate their friends' work. Marking is used well in all subjects and to check the work done as homework. Teachers' written comments give the pupils a very clear idea of how they could make their work better, but pupils are not always given sufficient encouragement and time to act on the good advice from their teachers.
- Pupils are encouraged to be reflective in their work and are often expected to evaluate it for themselves. Teachers also promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially by encouraging the pupils to extend their thinking. For example, in a successful history lesson in Year 6 the pupils were asked to make a connection between the abuse of children in the mines in the 1850s with present day concerns about child abuse that they have heard about. However, more-able pupils are not always encouraged to reflect in this way and are sometimes given work that is too easy.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and benefit from good additional support from capable teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are consistently used well, increasingly to support pupils with their individual needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There is a very welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are polite, courteous and get on well with each other and adults. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are expected to behave well and they do.
- In the few lessons where the pace of learning is slower a small minority of pupils lose concentration and begin to chat quietly to each other and fidget with equipment.
- Pupils have a mature understanding of the different groups within their school and know the importance of respect, acceptance and tolerance. This begins with the very youngest pupils; a whole class listened carefully to a pupil explaining, in Turkish, that the lamp needed to be plugged in to make it work. The different cultures represented in the school community are valued; festivals celebrated by the children in their homes are celebrated in school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants establish good relationships with their classes and manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. As a result, pupils are happy to contribute to the lessons and listen well to each other. However, in a few lessons a small number of pupils were content to let others answer the questions and made little response themselves.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take and say it happens very rarely. Parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils all agree that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The site manager said, 'The children are really good and like helping me keep everywhere looking nice.'
- Pupils understand potentially harmful situations including the misuse of the internet and mobile phones. They would know how to act if something seemed dangerous. Governors undertook their own survey to check and ensure that the pupils were and felt safe in school.
- Pupils are often asked to reflect on how their behaviour can affect other people. There is time built into each day when pupils discuss any issues which may have upset some pupils. This sustained consideration of each other's views and discussion about how issues can be resolved demonstrates the priority given to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development.
- The pupils' improved and now above average attendance is the result of a good system of rewards and sanctions. A strengthened partnership with parents and carers is also reducing the incidence of persistent absence effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The newly formed team of senior teachers effectively led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has a shared vision and ambition for continuous improvement. The result is that all staff and the governing body are focused on improving pupils' achievement through helping teachers improve their practice.
 - The systematic checking of pupils' progress and teaching by the school leaders means that mutual support and constructive criticism are helping teachers to improve.
 - Teachers are supported well through professional development and performance management. For example, the expertise of the very best teachers has been shared with newer members of staff who have subsequently improved their teaching. An effective link with a 'Leading school' has also enabled teachers to access additional training to improve their practice.
 - Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders, staff and governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and actions are planned and implemented well. As a result, the pupils have a daily diet of nearly all interesting, engaging lessons that are rapidly improving progress.
 - Following the previous inspection the local authority has been working closely with the school to bring good improvement in the quality of both teaching and progress. Currently, the local authority provides light touch leadership support.
 - Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide-ranging and interesting curriculum. Music and art are strengths in the school providing pupils with stimulating activities they may not experience elsewhere. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places linked to their lessons and by visitors who widen their view of the world. For example, the pupils talked excitedly about the African drummers who came into school and how they had wanted to try it for themselves. Their learning and personal development are also enriched by the good selection of sports and other activities held after school.
 - **The governance of the school:**

The governors ensure that their statutory obligations, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met and are effective. They challenge the school strongly, analysing national and school data and holding the school to account for the academic standards by questioning senior staff about the quality of teaching. The governors' good knowledge of the school's effectiveness enables them to play an effective role in appointing staff and in using performance management to inform salary progression. The governors ensure they are fully up to date on training and they use their good knowledge of pupil premium funding to lead the decisions about its use and to check and ensure that such additional funding has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Governors also noted the previous underachievement of girls in mathematics and by agreeing to the funding of additional teaching for a fourth group of pupils in Year 6, especially for girls, have promoted improved progress. In addition, some pupil premium funding has been specifically used to employ a 'Independent School Welfare Adviser' to work with families whose children are reluctant to come into school. Governors are determined, through regularly checking, to ensure that this support improves attendance and progress.
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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

Unique reference number	110366
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	401119

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Helsdon
Headteacher	Claire Dunston
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 December 2009
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