

Longmeadow Primary School

Oaks Cross, Broadwater, Stevenage, SG2 8LT

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching varies too much in different year groups.
- Work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities, especially for the more able. Teachers do not always check on how well pupils have understood what they are intended to learn.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to be independent in their use and application of key skills.
- The effect that leaders and governors have on teaching and pupils' achievement requires improvement. Leaders do not collect, analyse, and evaluate information on pupils' progress precisely enough to identify areas that need improving.
- Leaders are not consistently rigorous in the way they check the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Partnerships, including with the federation, are helping the school to improve.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are making better progress in their reading than they have in the past.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They behave in a safe manner, showing care and consideration to each other. Relationships are good between adults and pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. All teachers were seen teaching.
- Pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 were heard reading. An assembly and playtime were also observed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including lesson plans, incident logs, information on pupils' progress and records of lesson observations.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, a key stage leader and three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The responses of 21 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account as well as a discussion with a small group of parents. The responses from a staff questionnaire were also looked at.

Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Simon Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Veronica McGill	Additional Inspector
Vivien McTiff	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Longmeadow is larger than the average primary school.
- The school is federated with another school. The federated schools have one governing body and each school has its own headteacher.
- Most pupils are White British. An average proportion come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is the additional funding used to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - using assessment information carefully to match work to the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able
 - ensuring that teachers check pupils' understanding, during the course of lessons, to give help where it is needed and to move on pupils who have already mastered what is being taught
 - helping pupils to become more independent in their learning so they can use and apply their skills to new situations.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by:
 - building on the accurate assessments of pupils' achievement in order to plan and carry out a clear set of actions that will bring about more rapid progress in pupils' learning
 - ensuring that checking of the quality of teaching is accurate and robust, and continues to focus on the progress pupils are making in lessons and over their time at the school.
- Increasing rates of progress in writing throughout the school by:
 - improving the way a range of writing skills are taught and checked, such as handwriting, spelling and grammar
 - making sure that, during lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils how they can show progress from their different starting points.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are generally typical for their age. Their skills are lower in communication and literacy than in other areas of learning. Over time, children in the Nursery and Reception make the progress they should. By the time they finish the Reception Year, their attainment is in line with national averages. Their attainment in writing is lower than in other areas of learning.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 attain standards in line with national averages. In the past, attainment in writing has been weaker than that in reading, but writing has recently improved so that it matches attainment in reading. Attainment in mathematics is broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally, but last year it was higher. Attainment overall for pupils in Key Stage 2 is rising.
- The progress that pupils make in Key Stage 2 is quicker than in the past but still requires improvement in order to become good. Progress in reading for pupils currently in Key Stage 2 is good. Rates of progress in mathematics are accelerating. Progress is still slower in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make similar progress to other pupils in the school, but pupils supported at school action made slightly slower progress in mathematics.
- Those pupils who are from a minority ethnic group make similar progress to other pupils in the school. They too make better progress in mathematics than in English.
- Pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium have reached lower standards than other pupils in the past. However, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school has closed significantly. In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were around a term behind their classmates in English and roughly two terms behind in mathematics. This is a narrower gap than found nationally.
- In 2012, pupils' attainment in the national reading check at Year 1 was below average. However, these pupils have made quick progress this year and their attainment is now good in reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain results above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the case consistently over time. Standards in mathematics are higher than in reading and writing. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1.
- In reading, pupils are able to link letters and sounds in order to read common words and unknown words. They also use other skills such as picture clues and context clues in order to get meaning from what they are reading. Older pupils have a good awareness of different authors and different kinds of book and can say why they choose a particular book. They are enthusiastic and confident in the way they approach reading and are making good progress from their different starting points.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching varies too much across the school and not enough of it is good in order to bring about good rates of progress. During the inspection, no lessons were judged outstanding and no lessons inadequate.

- Teaching does not always meet the range of learning needs in classrooms and in classes that are set by ability. Pupils of different abilities are sometimes given the same tasks to do. As a result, some pupils, especially the more able, are not challenged enough to work to their full potential.
- When pupils write, teachers do not consistently check how well they are progressing in a range of writing skills. For example, pupils' handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation are not always given enough attention, both during lessons and in teachers' marking.
- When pupils are taught in ability sets, there is not always enough challenge, so that more-able pupils are not extending their learning. As a result, their progress is sometimes limited.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunity to explore and extend their thinking beyond the task in hand. They do not have enough opportunity to use and apply their skills independently to new learning.
- Teachers do not always check how well pupils are progressing during each lesson. As a result, pupils sometimes repeat mistakes and are not able to make good progress. Opportunities are also missed to move on to harder work pupils whose understanding is already secure.
- Where teaching is good, pupils are asked to contribute their ideas about how they will show progress in their work. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils suggested ways they could show their progress and these were checked by the teacher during the lesson. This helped them to make good progress.
- Other adults are generally used well in lessons and this helps to challenge pupils and support their learning. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the use of the 'key worker' system means that the progress and personal needs of younger children in the school is checked carefully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. School records and the views of parents confirm that this is typical.
- Pupils, including younger ones, know and understand the behaviour system. For example, they like the 'headteacher awards' and 'time points' that are used to reward good behaviour. They also say that school systems work well because pupils know the consequences of their actions.
- Adults manage behaviour well around the school and give good support to the few pupils who have behavioural needs. This supportive approach is effective in ensuring that pupils who may misbehave are able to focus on their work.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that any problems are dealt with well by staff. Pupils know about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- The school helps pupils to keep safe and pupils also say that they feel very safe. They learn about internet safety and road safety. Pupils play safely in the playground, such as when playing ball games and chasing games.

- Pupils show a positive attitude to their learning in lessons. They apply themselves to the task at hand and enjoy learning.
- Attendance has been lower than average in the past but the school's hard work has been effective in redressing the problem. For example, fixed-penalty fines and warning letters are used to remedy persistent absence. As a result, attendance has improved and is now average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Planned actions by leaders are starting to increase rates of progress, especially for pupils in Key Stage 2. For example, rates of progress in reading are becoming quicker. However, teachers and leaders do not always make enough use of information on pupils' achievement to plan for improvements in teaching and to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress in lessons and over their time at the school.
- Leaders at all levels show that they are accurate in knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Judgements made by the headteacher in joint lesson observations during the inspection were the same as those of the inspectors. Judgements on the quality of teaching are becoming more accurate and are increasingly linked to how well pupils are learning.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school to improve but, in the past, they have not challenged teachers enough to teach consistently good lessons. Targets set for teachers to improve their work are linked to pupils' achievement and have more recently been linked to the national Teachers' Standards. Training opportunities are also used to help teachers and leaders. For example, teachers have attended mathematics and English courses offered by the local authority, as well as joint training between the federated schools. As a result, pupils' progress, especially in reading, is improving.
- Partnerships, such as with the local authority and the federation, are effective in helping the school to improve. This includes staff within the federation working together to analyse information on pupils' progress. These partnerships are helping to check on pupils' progress more accurately and more often. Training opportunities are also helping to improve teaching, especially in English.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They learn about a range of religions and cultures from around the world and within the United Kingdom.
- Safeguarding requirements are met, such as checks on adults working with pupils and training for staff on child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and contributes to plans for school improvement. It receives information about the quality of teaching and knows how teachers' performance targets are linked to pupils' progress and to pay progression. Governors have information about pupils' achievement and evaluate this in their committees by comparing the achievement of pupils at Longmeadow Primary with other pupils nationally. They also use this to challenge the school leaders across both schools in the federation. For example, the performance targets for the headteachers are linked to pupils' learning and to pay progression. Members of the governing body know what the pupil premium is, how much it receives and how it is used, such as for sessions to help individual pupils and groups of pupils. They also know that the impact of this is that standards reached by pupils who receive the

pupil premium are improving compared to other pupils in the school. The governing body carries out its own self-evaluation of how well it is performing and this has led to improvements, such as increasing the number of school visits by members of the governing body.

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	135083
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	402669

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gardner
Headteacher	Laraine Hodgson
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2009
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