

Lawn Primary School

High Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9HB

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

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.

- Lawn Primary is an improving school which has successfully dealt with concerns raised at the previous inspection. All groups of pupils make good progress, often from low starting points, and their standards are rising. Pupils eligible for funding through the pupil premium progress faster than their classmates.
- Teachers organise pupils into groups so that planned activities are at the right level of difficulty for each group. Staff provide stimulating methods of teaching and materials that engage pupils' interest. As a result, pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics continue to improve.
- Changes in leadership and governance have led improvements in teaching, which is now good. More staff are routinely involved in checking pupils' learning. As a result, all staff are held to account for the progress of the pupils.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well at all times and say they feel safe. Their attendance has improved quickly so that most now attend regularly.
- Governors know the school well. They have forged effective partnerships with parents and the local community. This has helped all members of the school community to work well together.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 has been low over the last three years.
- Marking and feedback do not always provide sufficient guidance for pupils on their next steps. Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to improve their work by responding to the marking.
- Information on how well the pupils are doing is not always used to best effect, for example to promote faster rates of progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or part-lessons. All of the teachers were observed.
- Most of the lesson observations were shared with senior leaders. Short visits were made to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), and to gain evidence on the quality of feedback in mathematics.
- Pupils' work from each key stage was looked at with senior leaders in order to check pupils' progress and how well the books were marked.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's records of monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and attended assemblies.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were sought at the start and end of the school day, and through the school's surveys. There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered written comments from 26 staff.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Hamilton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school. Classes are organised so that there is a mixed-age Year 5 and Year 6 class, and a mixed-age Year 4 and Year 5 class.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language is increasing and is above average.
- Over half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, who was the acting headteacher at the time, has been appointed to the substantive post. She took up this post in May 2011. At the same time the school appointed a deputy headteacher. Since January 2013, this post is being covered by an acting deputy headteacher. In September 2012, a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the governing body were elected. The school has increased significantly in size in the last two years

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 1 so that it is at least in line with national averages, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in different topics and themes
 - improving the quality of feedback and marking so that pupils are given clear guidance on their next steps in learning, and providing opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their new skills.
- All leaders and managers make better use of information on how well the pupils are doing so that work is planned to help them make rapid and sustained progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills when they join the Nursery are often lower than expected for their age. This is particularly so in their communication skills. Skilled teaching and carefully structured activities help them to explore different types of learning, and they make quick gains in their understanding. By the time they leave the Reception Year their skills are broadly average.
- Although pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading is below the national average, pupils make good progress so that by the time they finish Year 6 they reach standards in line with most pupils nationally. This is true also in writing and mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to write in different styles and about different topics across a range of subjects. However, opportunities are missed for them to use their mathematical skills in problem solving in these topics.
- The introduction of a programme for the whole school to be taught letters and the sounds they make is improving pupils' skills in reading further. Pupils read with confidence and enjoyment and make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them read and write. Some make outstanding progress as a result.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Tasks set for them in lessons match their learning needs and they are given effective additional support.
- Pupils eligible for support funded through the pupil premium make particularly good progress. By the time they reach Year 6 their overall attainment in English is 12 months ahead of their classmates, and eight months ahead in mathematics. Funds are used to provide additional adult support and teaching resources so that their needs are well met. This reflects the school's commitment to supporting each individual to reach their potential, to equality of opportunity, and to challenging discrimination.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive extra help in developing their language skills when they arrive so that they are made to feel part of the school. Staff make sure, through planning suitable work, that these pupils learn English quickly and make good progress also in their other skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The best teaching is characterised by a quick pace and regular checks on learning. Teaching assistants are used well to support the needs of small groups. For example, pupils in Year 1 made good progress in understanding their number counting and patterns up to ten, through effective questioning by all adults. This reinforced their learning. Some were able to make rapid progress in identifying number patterns.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make is strong. Pupils in Year 1 to Year 4 are taught in mixed-age groups so that the activities are set at the right level of difficulty for each pupil. Children in the Nursery made rapid gains in their understanding of common words and sounds, as well as recognising rhyme in songs. A high level of engagement results from lively and exciting teaching and clear routines, which the children are used to.
- Pupils learn quickly the skills they need to help their classmates. They regularly take turns in helping each other improve their reading skills. Teachers are confident in teaching reading. Careful checking and follow up support is making sure that there is a consistent approach across the school. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and take every opportunity to improve their skills. As one said, 'When learning is fun children learn faster.'
- Marking and feedback is often thorough. Work is highlighted in pink to identify what the pupils have done well, and in yellow to indicate their next steps. Detailed comments together with clear targets set out on simple bookmarks help the pupils know what to do to improve. However, this quality is more consistent in English than mathematics. At times, not enough guidance is given to pupils on what they need to do to improve, and opportunities for pupils to correct their work

are sometimes missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are typically friendly and polite around the school. They have positive attitudes towards learning and listen well to their teachers. They work well together in pairs and in groups.
- Each class has agreed a charter based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is helping pupils to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour. As a result, their behaviour in lessons is good.
- Pupils treat each other with considerable respect and care. They show sensitivity towards others, and this ensures that bullying is rare. They understand how to avoid bullying, for example when using computers or mobile phones. Pupils mix well across cultural and ethnic groups. They are confident in their teachers, as one pupil said, 'Teachers do a very good job of sorting out behaviour.'
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility around the school and within the local community. They have a good sense of safety and are campaigning to have a pedestrian crossing installed on the main road. This is in conjunction with a local residents association. In addition they are working to reduce the fly tipping in the local area. This work is helping them to develop into mature and responsible young citizens.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding as their positive attitudes towards learning are not yet strong enough to promote consistently fast rates of progress in all subjects.
- Pupils and parents appreciate the breakfast and after-school clubs which provide safe and fun environments for pupils at the start and end of the day. Pupils are well looked after and enjoy school. Attendance is rapidly improving and is now at the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has strengthened leadership with the appointment of a permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher since the last inspection. Subject leaders are taking an increasing role in checking lessons and supporting teachers. This is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching, and is helping to make sure that there is consistency across the school. This is particularly evident in the leadership of English.
- The headteacher's vision to raise the aspirations for the school is fully supported by staff, governors and parents. All staff are expected to promote high levels of achievement, and robust checking of teaching by leaders and managers is resulting in improving rates of progress. There is a secure link between teachers' performance and salary progression.
- Staff are given many opportunities to extend their skills, and work well in teams. As one member of staff said, 'We are a strong team at Lawn Primary, and we support each other whenever required.'
- Leaders and managers have developed ways of tracking the progress made by pupils. Systems are still at an early stage, and not all make the best use of this information to help teachers accelerate progress. This information is not yet helping teachers to identify where pupils need help to make faster progress.
- Topics and themes include an international flavour through the links with a school in Malawi. In addition, the work on children's rights helps the pupils learn about the United Kingdom and the wider world. This helps the school to strongly promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with local schools. Links with a local nursery school are helping to improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Other links with local schools are providing opportunities for staff to have wider training.

■ The local authority has reduced its support as the school has improved and drawn on other partnerships. Previous support has helped the school to successfully address areas for improvement arising from the last inspection.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of governors in September 2012, members of the governing body are taking a more strategic role in the school. Meetings have been restructured to help them focus more on holding the school to account. Links with parents and the wider community have been strengthened. Governors have supported the school as it has increased in size, and recent training in finance is helping them understand how best to deal with the increase in roll. They have a good understanding of the impact of initiatives to accelerate progress and support the well-being of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. For example, the breakfast and after-school clubs, along with small group support sessions, are helping pupils supported through the pupil premium funding to make much better than expected progress. Governors have a good knowledge how staff performance this is managed and rewarded. The Chair of the Governing Body plays an active role in checking the learning of the pupils, so that governors gain an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They know how well the school is performing in relation to other schools. They ensure that statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding, are met.
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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	118264
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405756

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia McGrath
Headteacher	Angela Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2010
Telephone number	01474 365303
Fax number	01474 534655
Email address	headteacher@lawn.kent.sch.uk

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