

Lawnside Lower School

Lawnside, Biggleswade, SG18 0LX

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress in both English and mathematics from starting points that are below the levels expected for their age.
- Teaching is good. Lesson activities are usually planned at the right level of difficulty to make sure different ability groups make good progress.
- A major strength is the quality of help and guidance for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel safe at school. They have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons.
- The school works well in partnership with parents, who are highly positive about its welcoming and caring atmosphere.
- The leaders and managers know the school well, have sustained its effectiveness over time, and have clear plans to improve both teaching and learning further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers do not always give more demanding work to the most able pupils, and some do not reach the higher standards they are capable of in mathematics and writing.
- The comments made in marking do not always show pupils clearly just what they need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders and managers do not track the progress of different groups of pupils in enough detail to make sure all are making rapid progress.
- The targets set to improve teachers' performance are not sufficiently precise or measurable.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 20 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, they observed an assembly and visited classrooms to listen to pupils of different ages read and to talk to them about their work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, pupils, the Co-Chairs of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 16 responses by parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as those they spoke to at the start of the school day.
- They also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of staff.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documents including the school’s plans for improvement, records of meetings held by the governing body, and policies about keeping pupils safe. The team also examined the work in some pupils’ books and a range of information about their progress.

Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Liz Kissane	Additional Inspector
Graham Marshall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lawnside Lower School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. (This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.)
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs, are below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and make all teaching good or better, with an increasing amount that is outstanding, by ensuring all teachers:
 - use their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do to plan work that provides exactly the right amount of challenge for pupils with different abilities
 - show pupils exactly what they need to do next to improve their work
 - give pupils more chance to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English
 - provide more activities to develop pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers on the school's performance by:
 - making better use of data on how well pupils are doing to identify variations in the progress of different groups, so that support can quickly be provided where it is most needed
 - setting targets for teachers that are clearly written and measurable
 - setting sharper criteria for success in development planning, so the impact of all actions can be rigorously evaluated.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overall achievement of pupils is good. They enjoy school and are keen to learn.
- Most children start school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are below those typically found at this age, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills. Good teaching in the Reception classes enables children to make good progress. The skills of many children currently in Reception are below expectations because many arrive at different points during the year and have been with the school for varying lengths of time. However, by the time they enter Year 1 the gap with other pupils nationally has narrowed. Children make particularly good progress in their social skills and language development.
- Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 with standards that, overall, are broadly in line with those expected for their age. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Increasing numbers are achieving the higher levels in reading, although not as many achieve this in writing and mathematics. Pupils develop their writing skills well, for example using similes and exciting vocabulary, but do not have enough opportunity to write at length in all subjects.
- Results in the first national phonics screening check (which assesses pupils' grasp of the way sounds link with letters) for Year 1 were below the national average. However, by Year 2 almost all of these pupils have caught up and are reading with great enjoyment and confidence. Focused training for staff has had a positive impact on ensuring that more pupils in Year 1 are now working at the expected level.
- Progress in mathematics is good but not as strong as it is in reading and writing, and the school has quite rightly focused on developing pupils' problem-solving skills to address this. Progress seen in Year 4 lessons showed the positive impact this is beginning to have.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. In most lessons, the tasks are set for them are challenging but achievable.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make the same good progress as other groups, although their attainment when they leave the school remains on average one term behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The funding is used well by the school to provide additional teaching assistants, who support pupils well, often on a one-to-one basis.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has remained good overall. Teaching is typically good. There are some examples of outstanding teaching, and a small amount requires improvement.
- The best teaching is helping pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Here, teachers set out clearly what pupils are expected to learn and ensure pupils have clear guidance on what they have to do to be successful. They provide clear explanations and ask well-considered questions to develop pupils' thinking and clarify their understanding. Most plan well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Adults who work alongside them in class explain things clearly and prompt and question them thoughtfully to support understanding. As a result this group of pupils is making good progress.

- Where teaching is outstanding, as seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, teachers use their excellent subject knowledge and skilfully targeted questions to help pupils understand why and how they are being successful. They have very high expectations for the standards of work and behaviour, and use additional adults very well to support pupils who find learning harder. In these lessons, all pupils are set work which enables them to make good or better progress.
- Teachers generally check well on pupils' progress in lessons, giving helpful individual and group comments on what they need to do next. They mark work regularly but not always in enough detail to show pupils how they can improve their work, and do not always give them opportunities to practise the improvements suggested. Older pupils are developing the skills of evaluating their own work and that of their classmates, but this is at an early stage.
- On some occasions teaching is not effective enough to secure pupils' good progress in learning. This is because activities are not planned well enough to build on what pupils can already do and so do not provide the right amount of challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils.
- Classrooms and corridors are bright and welcoming places with high-quality displays of work, particularly those that show pupils' artistic achievements.
- All parents who responded to Parent View, or who spoke with inspectors during the inspection, believe their children are well taught at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides a caring and supportive environment where pupils behave well and show respect for themselves and others. They cooperate well together in lessons and around school.
- Pupils engage well with adults, who model good behaviour and interactions from the start of lessons. Relationships are positive and support the good progress seen in lessons. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are consistently high across the school. They make the rules clear and pupils respond well, showing enjoyment in their learning.
- Pupils recognise the range of rewards for behaving well and understand the consequences of not doing so, although these are not used often. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and all say they feel safe at school. Pupils have a good understanding of most safety issues.
- Almost all parents and staff think that behaviour is good at the school. No parents raised any concerns.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. They have good opportunities to learn about the thoughts and views of others. They care for each other and are developing a good understanding of the importance of caring for their environment as a result of their 'Forest School' activities and their experience of watching chicks hatching in the Year 1 classrooms.
- The school follows up concerns about pupils' well-being with vigour. It is active in involving different agencies to help solve the problems of individual pupils. As a result pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported.
- The school has a number of pupils with additional medical and social needs, and this has contributed to its overall attendance rate being below the national average. The very large

majority of pupils attend regularly. Pupils are punctual to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She has the full support of staff and governors. Staff are all proud to work at the school and say that they 'work well together as a team'.
- Teachers and senior staff meet regularly to discuss how well pupils are progressing. Any underachievement is dealt with by identifying pupils to work in small groups or to receive individual one-to-one support. However, the use of data to identify overall strengths, weaknesses and trends, particularly with regard to the progress of different groups of pupils, is underdeveloped.
- The school development plan contains appropriate actions to improve the school. However, the plan does not contain enough sharply-defined measures to enable leaders to track how well their planned actions are having the impact intended.
- The school has appropriate arrangements to review the progress of individual teachers. A suitable number of targets are set for each teacher, but these are not fully effective because they are not always written in terms that can be used to measure success. The school recognises the need to establish a clear link between pay and performance.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding to pay for training, teaching assistants for each classroom, and one-to-one tuition. The eligible pupils are making progress similar to other pupils by the end of Year 4. However, the school is at an early stage of evaluating the exact impact of the funding.
- The taught subjects are well planned, and enriched by a variety of visits and visitors such as Dinosaur Day in Year 1 and the Year 3 visit to the zoo. The small number of additional clubs are appreciated by pupils and parents.
- The school works well with other schools in the area and teachers are able to learn from colleagues elsewhere. Teachers have also collaborated within the school to share ideas on teaching, support each other and to develop their practice.
- The school has good links with parents and they think highly of the school, as shown in the response to Parent View and the school's own survey.
- Safeguarding arrangements comply with regulations. Leaders and managers are well equipped to ensure all staff recruited are closely checked, and to identify and respond to any concerns about pupils' welfare.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support, based on its own evaluation of the school's performance. It has offered good support to the governing body for the appointment of the new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a good range of expertise to their role, and some are able to visit the school on a regular basis and report back to their colleagues. The outgoing Chair has a very good knowledge of the school and is sharing this with her co-chair in preparation for handing over

the responsibility. Governors know how well the school is performing through reports on standards and progress from the headteacher and support from an external adviser, and know what is being done to improve teaching. They have discussed the 'Data Dashboard' but have not looked closely at detailed data. The governing body has a good structure of committees. The finance committee is particularly strong and funds are well managed. Governors know how the pupil premium money is being used, but are not yet aware of its impact in detail. Governors take the appraisal of the headteacher very seriously and oversee the arrangements for the management of the performance of other staff. They have also had training in child protection and safer recruitment to ensure that procedures and practices in these areas are secure.

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	109500
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	412540

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Neish
Headteacher	Carla Goodall
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2010
Telephone number	01767 312313
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