

Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery

Limes Avenue, Chigwell, IG7 5LP

Inspection dates 8–9 May 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.

- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in communication and language. They learn their letters and sounds quickly.
- Pupils make good progress in the other year groups and reach average standards in English and mathematics in Year 2.
- Good teaching helps pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make learn quickly. Teachers link subjects together well and plan lessons that motivate and engage pupils.
- The school checks pupils' academic progress and personal development effectively. Staff provide additional support where it is needed most.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They have positive attitudes to learning and take responsibilities seriously. Their behaviour in lessons, and when playing outside, is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They say that infrequent bullying is dealt with very well.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide clear and effective leadership. This supports the maintenance of good practices in the school.
- Leaders and managers at all levels have improved the school, most notably in the quality of teaching.
- The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide a good level of challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have a wide enough range of opportunities to write in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to plan work that challenges higher-attaining pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which nine were observed jointly with members of the senior management team.
- They listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 2.
- Inspectors met with the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, members of the governing body and had a discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- They looked at a range of documentation, including that for safeguarding, school self-evaluation and improvement planning, the school's current data showing pupils' progress and records of visits made by the local authority's representative.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), discussions with parents and responses to a questionnaire returned by 19 staff.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, with a higher-than-average proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families, is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

There have been a number of changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills for different purposes in the full range of subjects
 - giving more time for pupils to use the full range of their skills in pieces of extended writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure teachers use information on pupils' previous attainment to consistently plan work suitable for the abilities of all pupils, particularly more-able pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to tackle tasks for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school from their below-average starting points. All the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or completed the online questionnaire agreed. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is typically average, although standards dipped in 2012.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for children. Well-planned experiences and careful checking on progress help children to learn and develop successfully, both inside and outdoors. Progress in communication and language is particularly good. They quickly learn phonics (the sounds that letters make), which gives children a significant boost in their development as successful readers.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of their targets and this is helping them to improve their work. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their extended writing skills for different purposes in different subjects. As a result, pupils' writing skills are behind those in reading and mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. The progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to that of other pupils in the school. Those at an early stage of learning English make good gains in language development and good progress across different subjects. This is because the school places considerable emphasis on understanding words. For example, a teacher promoted an atmosphere of always asking the meaning of unknown words such as 'prediction' and 'vermin' when pupils in Year 2 were using their phonics knowledge.
- Pupils across the school enjoy reading. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 apply their knowledge of linking letters and sounds to pronounce unfamiliar words and show understanding of the stories they read.
- In 2012, the pupils in Year 2 supported through pupil premium funding did not reach age-related expectations in English and mathematics assessments. Additional funding has been effectively spent on staff who give carefully planned support for small groups of pupils to ensure that they do not fall behind in their learning. There is now little difference between the attainment of those pupils who are eligible and those not eligible for free school meals.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, particularly in the teaching of letters and sounds. Children become confident learners by following activities of their own choice as well as those directed by adults, including those in the outdoor area.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge. They use this to engage pupils in learning, as well as assess their understanding throughout lessons. For example, a teacher used his own wide knowledge of dinosaurs very skilfully to challenge pupils in Year 1 to think about the physical differences between carnivores and herbivores.
- Staff use questions well to engage pupils, check understanding and challenge them to develop their understanding further. Supportive questioning enables pupils to make contributions to class discussions and a number of teachers are skilled at getting pupils to explain their understanding

of concepts to the rest of the class.

- Teachers' marking is good. It gives pupils a good idea of how well they are doing, what their targets are and how they can improve their work. Teachers provide time for pupils to follow advice given on how to improve their work. Teachers give pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing and how to improve their work. They give opportunities for pupils to respond to the advice given.
- Most lessons include many opportunities for pupils to share their ideas, reflect on hypotheses and to collaborate when answering questions. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well, and their acceptance of the values of pupils from different backgrounds.
- Lessons involve a range of interesting activities so that pupils normally display enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. Teachers regularly follow-up the various visits outside school and make sure that these are used to support learning in the classroom. Sometimes staff give too much guidance to pupils on how to complete their tasks. This reduces the pupils' ability to work independently and slows their rate of progress.
- Teachers throughout the school use their knowledge about pupils' interests to plan new learning. They use a good range of different resources. However, information on how well pupils have achieved in the past is not used well enough to plan work that is always demanding for all pupils, especially for the higher-attaining pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development from the time they start in the Nursery. They have good relationships with each other and adults.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons, and this contributes to a calm and orderly environment for learning. The behaviour of pupils is managed well by adults, who use praise and rewards skilfully. Behaviour records show that there are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Parents and carers are positive about behaviour in the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the main forms of bullying. They say bullying happens occasionally, but that it is always dealt with very well. They know how to stay safe, and are well aware of the risks associated with everyday aspects of life such as road safety.
- Pupils feel valued as individuals. They respond well to the strong tradition in the school of caring for one another. Pupils are considerate, polite and courteous to staff and each other and this contributes well to their learning and enjoyment of school. When talking about the school, one pupil said, 'It's the best!'
- Attendance is improving and is broadly in line with the national average. The school works hard to promote to parents the importance of regular attendance and its link to good learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides effective leadership and direction for the school to improve. All leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. They work

effectively, using well-chosen strategies to successfully tackle the slightly weaker aspects of the school's performance. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and uses a wide range of information. Consequently senior leaders have a good understanding about the strengths of the school and the areas for development. The school improvement plan identifies quantifiable measures to show whether it is successful in meeting its targets.
 - The system for managing the performance of staff means that teachers are accountable for the progress of their pupils. Salary increases are linked to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Well planned professional development opportunities enhance the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.
 - The promotion of equality of opportunity is strong and results in any gaps in pupils' learning closing quickly. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Staff promote very good relationships between pupils and this has a positive impact on pupils' engagement with their learning.
 - The curriculum has a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A good range of sporting activities and visits to places of interest enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, pupils in Year 2 visited the National Gallery in London to help them increase the depth of their understanding of artistic features of paintings.
 - The school receives light-touch but good-quality support from the local authority.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed about the strengths of the school and areas for improvement. Its members are well trained, and well equipped to hold the school to account and do so by asking challenging questions. Governors are committed to raising achievement and make effective use of a range of information to hold the school to account for school improvement. They agree the headteacher's performance management targets and oversee the management of staff performance. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. They know about the achievement of pupils and how this compares with all schools nationally. They monitor closely how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on achievement. They ensure that the school complies fully with all requirements for safeguarding and child protection.
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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	114962
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412642

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ayo Ogunsanlu
Headteacher	Jan Tunney
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2010
Telephone number	020 8501 1115
Fax number	020 8501 2993
Email address	admin@limesfarm-inf.essex.sch.uk

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