

Lamberhurst St Mary's C of E Primary School

Pearse Place, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 8EJ

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- School leaders are ambitious for the pupils and have built a strong staff team that shares the core aims of ensuring that all pupils, regardless of background or circumstance, succeed.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress across the school to reach standards that are above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- All pupils, including those pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, make good progress because good teaching is well matched to their stages of learning.
- Teachers plan lessons with interesting activities that are well matched to the needs of pupils. They explain clearly what pupils are expected to learn.
- Specialist staff provide additional enrichment, activities such as music, French and sports, and this effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils, staff and parents are proud of their school. Pupils speak about the friendly, caring atmosphere in which they feel safe and secure. This is a strength of the school and discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and this is reflected in their attendance, improved since the last inspection, which is above average.
- School leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be further improved. They have successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection and are well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing, although above average, is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching to secure outstanding achievement for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, seven of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. She looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. The inspector also attended an assembly.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, governors and groups of pupils. Additionally, the inspector met with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Documents scrutinised included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, pupils' assessment records, monitoring information and the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of 38 responses to the on-line Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and some pupils are taught in mixed age classes. There is one Years 3/4 and one Years 4/5 class, with the remainder all single-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium), because they are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. There are no children who are looked after by the local authority or who are from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching even further, so that a higher proportion is outstanding, by:
 - making the best use of assessment information to plan lessons that build on previous learning
 - ensuring that pupils correct and improve their work in response to teachers' marking.
- Raise standards in writing to those in reading and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation and that they use these to a consistently high standard in their work
 - showing pupils examples of good quality writing demonstrating how authors use language, spelling and punctuation to express their ideas, and to improve the quality of pupils' writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils work hard and make good progress in English and mathematics so that their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. Their attainment is above average in reading and mathematics and it is average in writing. Pupils speak clearly and fluently, explaining their ideas and listening carefully to what others have to say.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well in lessons by skilled teaching assistants who explain clearly what pupils are expected to do, which helps them in their learning.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress and attain standards that are above that of other pupils nationally. By the end of Year 6, according to national tests, they are about a year ahead of other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics because of the well targeted additional support provided. They attain at a similar level to other pupils in reading and match the performance of their peers within the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start school with skills that are broadly as expected for their age, except in communication, language and literacy where they are lower. They make good progress so that by the time they start Year 1 they use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to read and write simple words and sentences. They play and work happily together, reflecting their good social development
- Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and they make good progress. They have a secure grasp of using various strategies, including phonics, to read unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 2 talk confidently about their favourite books and authors. By the end of Year 6, pupils read widely both to find information and for pleasure. One pupil said she enjoyed reading because 'it takes you to places you could not normally go'.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as good as it is in other subjects. This is partly because their handwriting, spelling and punctuation are not as good as they should be and this means pupils do not write fluently and confidently. Additionally, they do not have a secure understanding of how to use language, grammar and sentence structure to improve the quality of their work. This is because teachers do not show them enough examples of good writing by authors.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. They have a secure grasp of basic number skills which they use to calculate accurately and investigate mathematical problems. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge to sort sweets into groups and to create a chart to show the different ways this information could be recorded.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, and occasionally outstanding. All teachers have established a positive climate for learning in which good relationships between teachers and pupils inspire pupils to work hard and behave well at all times. Parents who responded to the survey agreed that their children are taught well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because skilled teaching assistants provide them with additional help, sometimes within the class and sometimes in small groups.
- Lessons are well planned with clear learning intentions. Teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. However, a very few teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to plan lessons that build on previous learning, particularly in writing.
- In most lessons, although not always based on the best use of assessment information, teachers provide challenging activities that are very well matched to the needs and interests of pupils. These are supported by timely questions through which teachers can judge the extent to which pupils are learning, and identify those who may need a little extra help, or an extra challenge.

- Most teachers provide pupils with opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in real-life situations. For example, in mathematics, pupils across the school used their knowledge of number to solve written problems. This required them to read with understanding and choose the right calculation to solve the problems.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to demonstrate what they want pupils to learn. This is particularly effective in mathematics lessons, where pupils can see how to use a number line to help them to subtract numbers. However, not all teachers use enough high quality books to show pupils how authors use language, grammar and punctuation to express their ideas, and to stimulate pupils' imaginations.
- A strength of teaching is the way in which teachers observe pupils' learning and adjust their lessons to address misunderstandings. In a Years 4/5 literacy lesson, the teacher realised that some pupils were struggling to write instructions correctly and so she stopped the lesson to remind pupils about the need to write in a clear and logical sequence.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide detailed comments telling them what they have done well and what they need to do next. However, they do not all consistently ensure that pupils respond to their comments, and this slows pupils' progress, particularly in writing.
- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with positive learning experiences and a broad range of stimulating activities both indoors and outside. There is a good balance of activities that are led by adults and those that children select for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. They speak warmly of the relationships they have with teachers and with each other. They are reflective and sensitive to the needs of others and show kindness and consideration towards each other both in lessons and around the school.
- The school is bright and attractive with vibrant displays of pupils' work that make pupils feel valued. The atmosphere is calm and safe and one in which pupils play and work together without fear of discrimination. School leaders and pupils point to the exciting outdoor area that has been developed and is much appreciated by all pupils.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They have an excellent awareness of right and wrong and they respond very well to the consistent systems for managing behaviour used by staff. There have been no exclusions in recent years and school records show very few recorded incidents relating to poor behaviour.
- Pupils understand different forms of bullying, such as that associated with computers, physical differences and name calling, but they are adamant that it does not happen. They point to trained peer mediators who help those pupils who very occasionally fall out and they say that helpful adults are always on hand.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe outside school. They understand the risks associated with road safety and fire. They are taught about the potential dangers posed by some substances and tobacco abuse.
- Inspection findings confirmed parents' view that their children behave well and are safe and happy at school.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders and governors are ambitious and they have high expectations for both staff and pupils. Plans for further improvement are based on a thorough evaluation of the school's performance. Teamwork is strong and staff morale is high.
- Leaders check the work of teachers through a robust programme of formal and informal visits to classrooms. They provide support and guidance to teachers about how they can improve their

work. Consequently, teaching has improved and is consistently good.

- Although leaders look at pupils' work in their books, this is not as frequent as it should be, particularly in writing. Therefore, this weaker aspect of teaching goes unchecked and this lack of monitoring is why leadership is not outstanding.
 - All teachers have performance management targets linked to pupils' achievement, and progression on the salary scale is dependent on teachers meeting their targets. A planned programme of professional development links both with the school improvement plan and teachers' targets.
 - The curriculum is rich and stimulating and provides pupils with a wide range of experiences. Specialist tuition has enabled pupils to reach high standards in music. There is a varied programme of activities for pupils, including fencing, at the start and the end of the school day. Pupil premium funding is partly used to support eligible pupils to take part in school visits and this helps to improve their confidence and contributes to their good achievement.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and underpins all that the school does. The school's ethos of care and support, valuing all pupils, demonstrates its commitment to securing equal opportunities for everyone. There are strong links with the church and partnerships with other schools are good.
 - Safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements and are implemented by all staff to ensure that pupils feel very safe in school.
 - The local authority rightly has full confidence in the school and provides light touch support.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good balance of skills and expertise to provide effective challenge and support to school leaders. They know about the quality of teaching and check that teachers' progression on the salary scale is dependent on their performance. As a result of training, they have a good understanding of how the school's standards compare with those of other schools nationally. Governors have a good knowledge of the use of pupil premium funding and agree on how it is spent. They appreciate the benefits this brings in raising pupils' self-esteem and developing their confidence in learning. They have a secure overview of the school's finances.
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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	118604
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	403352

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracie Dodd
Headteacher	Caroline Bromley
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
Telephone number	01892 890281
Fax number	01892 890281
Email address	headteacher@lamberhurst.kent.sch.uk

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