

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, TN11 8QP

Inspection dates 9– 10 May 2013

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

- Teaching is not consistently good. Not all teachers plan work that builds well on what pupils have learned before. They do not always set high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve or for the presentation of their work.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient practical resources and visual prompts to increase pupils' understanding.
- The excessive use of undemanding worksheets limits opportunities for pupils to test their own ideas and make decisions about how to present their ideas.
- Teaching assistants are not used enough to support pupils' learning throughout lessons.
- Pupils mostly behave well, but in some lessons they take too long to complete their tasks.
- Teachers' marking does not give pupils enough advice about how to improve their skills, especially in mathematics. Teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to respond to comments or correct their mistakes.
- Not all pupils can recall number facts quickly enough to make good progress in mathematics. There is no clear programme of mathematics to ensure that their skills can be developed thoroughly and used in other subjects.
- Subject leaders have had little training recently and this limits their effectiveness.
- The governors have completed discussions with staff for new procedures for their appraisal because links between the targets set for pupils' progress and teachers' pay reviews have not been strong enough to raise the overall quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils make good progress in English. Attainment in reading is high and in writing it is above average in Years 2 and 6.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the more able do well.
- Pupils are kept safe and vulnerable pupils are cared for well. The nurture group is successfully helping pupils to gain confidence and to learn effectively.
- Governors use their exceptional skills to challenge and support the school. Together with the acting headteacher they have a very clear view of the action needed to raise pupils' achievements. They are not afraid to take difficult decisions to bring this about.
- Strong partnerships with the parents, carers and the community enabled the governors to raise all of the funds needed, and to project manage the building of a new classroom.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed substantial parts of eight lessons, and made brief visits to a further two. Almost all were observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work in mathematics and English were scrutinised.
- Some pupils read to the inspector and others representing Years 3 to 6 shared their views about the school. Their behaviour was observed in lessons, lunchtime and at playtimes.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and staff with responsibility for English, mathematics, the Early Years Foundation Stage, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- The responses of 55 parents and carers who completed the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account.
- Documents reviewed included the school's improvement plan, the summary of the school's checks on how well it is doing, arrangements for appraisal, safeguarding, and records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are taught in single-age classes, while those in Years 3 to 6 are taught in classes with two age groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is low. This is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces. Currently there are no looked after or service family children in the school. No pupils supported by pupil premium were in the group that took the national tests in 2012 so no comparisons of achievement are possible.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that found in most schools.
- Since the previous inspection the number of pupils attending the school has risen and a new classroom has been built to accommodate them. While the building work was underway pupils were taught in the hall. Three members of staff have left.
- A small number of pupils start and leave the school at other than the usual times, especially in Key Stage 2.
- At the time of the inspection there was an acting headteacher. The process to appoint a new headteacher is underway and is due to be completed shortly after the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better throughout the school by ensuring that all staff:
 - plan lessons that identify what pupils are to learn and how it builds on what they have learned before
 - set high expectations of what pupils should achieve
 - expect pupils to complete a good amount of work in each lesson and to present it to a high standard
 - avoid the use of worksheets so that pupils can be resourceful and make decisions about their work
 - provide younger pupils with visual prompts so that they can write unaided
 - use teaching assistants effectively to support pupils' learning throughout lessons
 - give pupils a clear indication in marking of what they do well and need to do to improve their work, and provide time for them to respond to comments and make corrections.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - including opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop, practise and apply the rapid recall of mental facts such as number bonds and multiplication tables
 - giving pupils practical and pictorial resources to increase their understanding of mathematical ideas
 - providing a variety of challenging mathematical activities that help pupils to think deeply and

apply their skills across a range of subjects

- reviewing the mathematics and calculation policies, and the programme for teaching mathematics, so that all staff are clear about the methods to be used and how to develop pupils' skills more effectively.

■ Strengthen the leadership and management by:

- raising the skills of subject leaders so they contribute fully to the school's development and improve pupils' achievements
- putting into practice the revised agreed system for the appraisal of all staff so they can be held to account for their pupils' rates of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The number of pupils in Year 6 is small in comparison to many schools. National tests results rise and fall each year. They are affected annually by the proportion of pupils who leave and join the school at different times, by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- In 2010 results overall were just below average; in 2011 they were significantly above average. In 2012 pupils' attainment in English was above average, but in mathematics it was only average. That said, more-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs did better than those in similar circumstances nationally that year.
- In mathematics, throughout the school, pupils' progress requires improvement. The lack of a clear and detailed programme for teaching mathematics makes it difficult for teachers to develop pupils' knowledge of the methods to use and apply their skills effectively in other subjects. Pupils generally do not recall number facts quickly or use practical or pictorial resources to increase their understanding.
- The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not good enough in writing and calculation. There are good activities to help children to develop the vocabulary they need, but they do not have enough visual prompts to help them to write on their own. While some know about numbers to 100, others are unable to count correctly in sequence to 20.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6 is much higher than in many schools. Pupils have a good grasp of the sounds that letters make. They read often at home and to volunteers who visit the school regularly. This helps them to make rapid progress, and read a wide range of good quality children's literature.
- Older pupils write imaginatively and confidently for a wide range of purposes. They develop a good style of handwriting, and by Year 6 they are mostly accurate in their use of spelling and grammar.
- To give pupils an equal chance to succeed, the school provides very effective support to disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for additional funding. Staff put into practice the advice from a range of specialists when working with pupils in the nurture group, other small groups or individually. This helps these pupils to achieve well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- While there is some good teaching, overall it requires improvement. This is because not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils should be able to do and do not always plan lessons based on what they have learned before. Too often lesson plans focus on what adults are to do rather than what pupils are to learn.
- In mathematics teachers do not provide enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to learn, practise and recall rapidly number facts and multiplication tables. Pupils' books show there is not a sufficient variety of stimulating mathematical activities to help pupils think hard and apply their skills in a range of situations.
- Activities in mathematics and writing are not always supported by practical resources. In the younger classes particularly, pupils do not have access to sufficient resources to make learning purposeful and help them work unaided.
- In some classes teachers ask pupils to complete a substantial number of undemanding worksheets, which add little to their understanding. This limits opportunities for them to explore their ideas, make decisions about how best to record their work and use their initiative.
- Each class has a teaching assistant who supports groups or individual pupils well during the main activities in lessons. They are not always used to best advantage at the beginning and end of lessons to help those they support to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress each half term and use the information from the new tracking

system to identify those who are not making as much progress as they should. Support programmes are devised to help pupils catch up.

- The quality of marking is inconsistent. At its best it tells pupils what they have done well, but usually it does not provide them with advice about what they need to do to make their work better. There are too few opportunities for pupils to respond to comments and learn from their corrections.
- Where teaching is good, teachers use imaginative methods to capture pupils' enthusiasm and motivate them to understand how their learning relates to the wider world. For example in Year 6, pupils wrote letters to persuade government ministers to review the policy towards sport in schools.
- The good lessons were also characterised by:
 - good explanations about what pupils were to learn and how they would know they had been successful by the end of the lesson
 - skilled questioning that challenged pupils to justify their ideas
 - open-ended activities that captured their enthusiasm and extended the thinking abilities of more-able pupils
 - tasks that required pupils to apply their high-quality reading skills to extract information from a text
 - good management of behaviour so that adults could help individuals without interruption
 - high expectations that pupils could work on their own using appropriate resources.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement because some pupils talk about their work with a partner for too long before recording their ideas. Teachers are sometimes not aware that this is happening and do not redirect pupils quickly to the task in hand. Pupils do not always complete sufficient work in the time available or take care over its presentation. These factors hinder the rate at which they progress.
- The school has a happy atmosphere because discrimination and unkindness are not tolerated. Mostly pupils are polite and well mannered towards each other and to adults. Very few pupils have been prevented from coming to school because of their behaviour in the past two years.
- All staff and the vast majority of parents and carers in their responses to the questionnaires believe that behaviour is good. During the inspection no lessons observed were interrupted by unacceptable behaviour. Pupils move around the school sensibly, and during break and lunchtimes older pupils often play with and help the younger ones.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Those in the nurture group know that their feelings and concerns are taken seriously. Pupils understand that there are different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying, and what to do if they feel intimidated.
- Attendance is above average, and pupils arrive at school on time.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is not sufficient to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. Recorded notes in the school show that:
 - the appraisal process that links salaries to pupils' progress has not been sufficiently robust in holding teachers to account
 - checks on the quality of teaching are not securely linked to their impact on pupils' progress
 - subject leaders have received too little training to contribute fully to the school's development and improve the rate at which pupils progress
 - the mathematics and calculation policies lack the detail to support teachers in developing

pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical ideas effectively.

- On the basis of the school's previous inspection and its understanding of national data, the local authority has taken a light touch approach towards the school.
- Parents and carers responding to Parent View show that they have full confidence in the transitional leadership and management of the school.
- The acting headteacher, together with governors and staff, is working energetically to improve the school's effectiveness. New checks on how well the school is doing have been carried out robustly. The school's short-term development plan is being revised to ensure that it matches more closely the school's priorities for improvement, and that progress towards achieving its targets is easily measurable.
- The range of taught subjects makes learning appealing. It enables pupils to develop and use their literacy and research skills well across a variety of subjects, although this is not the case in mathematics. The recent popular introduction of more instrumental tuition and a choir have broadened opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in music.
- High-quality artwork in the style of famous artists, residential visits and a whole-school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* add much to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The partnership with parents, carers and the community is strong. They raise substantial funds to support the school and share their professional expertise in supporting pupils with speech, language and reading difficulties. Many volunteers visit to listen to pupils read, while parents and carers also support their children with homework.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely knowledgeable about their roles and the interpretation of national and school data together with its links to the quality of teaching. Their plans to develop the school in the long term are highly ambitious for pupils' achievements. They have not been afraid to take challenging decisions to improve the effectiveness of the school. They know that the appointment of the new headteacher is pivotal to its future success.
 - Members of the governing body use their expertise in building, modern technology, project management and finance to benefit the school in many ways. They monitor the budget carefully and know well that additional funding is benefiting the pupils concerned. They have also developed a custom-built tracking system that enables staff to record and check pupils' progress and identify those who may be falling behind. The new classroom, built with funds raised in the community and project managed by governors, means pupils are no longer taught in cramped conditions or the hall.
 - Governors have been involved, appropriately, in the pay and review systems linked to the headteacher's performance. They have recently completed the negotiations of revised procedures for the appraisal of all staff, so they can be held to account for the quality of their teaching and the progress their pupils make. These arrangements are due to be introduced shortly.

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	118278
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	412348

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	4– 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Henderson
Headteacher	Daniel Eaton (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1– 2 March 2010
Telephone number	01732 2832660
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Email address	headteacher@leigh.kent.sch.uk

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