

Lethbridge Primary School

Lethbridge Road, Swindon, SN1 4BY

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Attainment is well above national levels in Year 6, with an increasing number of pupils working at Levels 5 and 6.
- The new headteacher ensures all leaders have a sharp focus on improving teaching and learning. Consequently, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is continuing to rise and all groups make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff and pupils share a strong belief in the values of their school. They are proud to be part of it.
- Pupils are very happy at school. Warm and trusting relationships underpin their enjoyment of learning. Everyone is included and respected. Staff know the pupils well.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that is typically good, with an increasing proportion which is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and are nurtured well.
- The driving force behind the school's improvement has been the good leadership of the new headteacher who is strongly supported by a knowledgeable governing body.
- Pupils have many memorable and vibrant learning opportunities, including a wide variety of visits and visitors to the school, which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure all pupils' progress is rapid and sustained across all year groups.
- Until recently, pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent, particularly in writing.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles and are not yet having a full impact on school improvement.
- Teachers do not always match work to pupils' next steps so that learning slows.
- Teachers' comments in marking do not always show pupils how they can improve their work.
- Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to develop their independent skills in lessons are missed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons involving 14 teachers; three lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. They also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the school improvement provider.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with them at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Payne

Additional Inspector

Shahnaz Maqsood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background. Increasing proportions come from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is well below average.
- In 2012, the school achieved the Intermediate International, Values and Silver Eco-school awards.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes with three teachers for 70 children.
- A private provider manages before- and after-school care. This was not part of the school inspection and is subject to separate inspecting and reporting arrangements.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school converted to academy status July 2011, although it is still known as Lethbridge Primary School. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012, as were most middle leaders. The two acting deputy headteachers were appointed in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all pupils make rapid progress over a sustained period, by ensuring that:
 - teachers always match activities in lessons precisely to pupils' different abilities which maximises achievement
 - learning moves at a consistently rapid pace in all lessons
 - teachers' comments in marking are used consistently to show pupils how they can improve their work
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to use their initiative in lessons and learn independently.
- Accelerate the recent development of the leadership roles of middle leaders by:
 - increasing the opportunities for them to check on teaching and learning and consistently guide the development of colleagues' skills
 - fully involving them in data analysis, tracking pupils' progress and monitoring school improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in Reception classes make good, and at times outstanding, progress. The vast majority of children leave Reception exceeding national expectations. This is because children have opportunities to share in a broad range of stimulating activities, both indoors and outdoors, supported by high quality interventions from adults.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in both English and mathematics. Although the school's own data show that progress has further improved this year, it is not rapid and sustained throughout all year groups because planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' precise next steps in learning. Nevertheless, all groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, achieve well.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is well above national average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils have good opportunities to read for a variety of purposes in lessons and enjoy reading a wide range of books.
- Results in the national phonic screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2012 were below average. The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) through daily sessions. The school's data show that pupils currently in Year 1 are achieving well above national levels.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress similar to their peers. This is because of the broad range of approaches used by teachers and well-trained teaching assistants which supports their learning effectively.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding make good progress. The overall attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2012 was the equivalent of two terms behind their classmates in English and one term behind in mathematics. The school's current information shows that the gaps have closed rapidly.
- Parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) or spoke to inspectors at the start of the school day indicated that their children are making good progress at the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there are elements of outstanding practice across the school. Lessons see busy pupils responding with enthusiasm to the many opportunities to apply their skills. Activities in the classroom and outdoors, for example science week and World Book Day, excite and motivate pupils to succeed.
- Teachers have high expectations. Reading, writing, mathematics and phonics are taught well. Teachers have increased their knowledge of what makes an effective lesson and what impact this has on pupils' progress through the sharing of good practice.
- In the better lessons, relationships are strong, teachers question pupils effectively and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning. Good links are made with previous work and other subjects. Pupils are motivated by the tasks in hand and they have good opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other. As a result, learning is fun and all groups of pupils make good progress. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 science lesson, where the teacher challenged pupils to apply their knowledge of light following a week of practical science activities. Good questioning and precise feedback to pupils encouraged them to extend their knowledge and to use scientific vocabulary accurately.
- Although marking is regular, teachers' comments do not always help pupils improve their work. In a few classes, pupils are not given the opportunity to respond to comments.
- Where teaching is less strong, teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve. This means that some of the tasks, particularly for more-able pupils, are not sufficiently demanding and the pace of learning slows. Occasionally, opportunities are missed in lessons for pupils to find things out

for themselves.

- Pupils supported by the pupil premium receive well managed help which enables them to achieve as well as other pupils. The focus on individual needs also ensures that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups are supported effectively and progress well.
- In the Reception classes, teaching is typically good, and at times outstanding, where adults provide interesting activities which engage children. They intervene at appropriate points to enhance children's learning and regularly assess and record their progress. Staff work closely with parents and carers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is exemplary. This is reinforced by warm and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork in the school and pupils respond to this very positively. Pupils have a great pride in their school. Their involvement in the school's value codes makes a marked contribution to the outstanding behaviour.
- Pupils work together very well. They have a great desire to learn, which contributes greatly to their good achievement.
- Parents have great confidence in the care that the school provides and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. A parent described Lethbridge as 'a pupil and family friendly school at the heart of the community'. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire, or spoke to inspectors, judged behaviour to be excellent and their children to be safe in school.
- Discussions with pupils showed they understand about different types of bullying. They said that, although squabbles may sometimes arise, there is no bullying in school and that, if it were to occur, staff would deal with it immediately.
- Pupils play an active role in ensuring a happy, well-organised school. Year 5 'buddies' help Year 2 with reading and library visits, Year 6 children help Reception children at lunchtimes. These opportunities, as well as being school councillors, have an extremely positive impact on their personal development.
- Pupils show clear values of respect and tolerance of others. This is because these aspects are central to the school's values and are well supported by the school's motto of 'Live, Learn and Achieve'.
- Pupils in the Rainbow group make good progress from their starting points because they receive help well suited to their needs. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social skills.
- The school has close working relationships with a number of outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Attendance is consistently high when compared to the national average.
- Through a well planned range of activities, pupils are helped to develop strategies so that they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, fire and roads.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders form an effective team. Along with the governors, they have ensured the school's move to academy status has had beneficial outcomes for all pupils.
- Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher and morale is high. All staff value the opportunities for training and speak of the benefits this has had in further accelerating pupils' learning and achieving the headteacher's raised expectations.
- Improvements have been made through effective evaluation of the school's work, strategic planning supported by governors, and the teamwork of staff to tackle weaknesses in teaching

and achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2, phonics and in writing. All teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their care. Although many middle leaders are new to their roles, they are having an increasing impact on school improvements.

- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers very effectively, with clear links between the rewards that teachers receive and pupils' good progress. Teachers are set clear targets linked to pupil progress, thus promoting good or better teaching successfully.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is managed well by the special educational needs coordinator.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. There are no incidents of harassment. Pupil premium funding is managed well so that eligible pupils make good progress.
- The school improvement provider and close links with the local authority and local schools have provided regular support for school leaders to help them to evaluate the school's performance accurately and to develop a clear strategy to improve the school further.
- The school's 'open door' policy is greatly appreciated by parents and carers, who feel informed about, and involved in, their children's learning. Transition into and out of the school is effective and well managed. The regular 'Join and stay' sessions in the Reception classes are greatly appreciated by parents and carers.
- The creative topics bring together different subjects in a way that the pupils describe as 'interesting and fun' and contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons are enriched extremely well through a wide range of after-school activities and by opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language and music. Visits, including residential visits to Germany, and opportunities to develop sporting and artistic skills add further enhancement.
- The richness of these experiences ensures pupils mature into confident, well-rounded and thoughtful individuals. They are keen to make a positive contribution to the wider community. They participate in, and often lead, the many fundraising and community projects with enthusiasm.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body supports and monitors the work of the school well. Governors understand the school's performance information well and how the school has improved. As a result of effective training they provide good support to the headteacher and senior leaders because they are increasingly able to ask the difficult questions about how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning. The governing body is kept informed regularly about how teaching is improving, and governors visit the school regularly to check on performance. This has led to good decisions being made on the rewards that teachers receive, and effective allocation of the school's finances and the pupil premium, which it monitors through regular visits. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet the regulatory requirements.

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	132193
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	402750

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Weir
Headteacher	Violet McLaren
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 January 2010
Telephone number	01793 535033
Fax number	01793 509320
Email address	head@lethbridgeprimary.co.uk

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