

# Lime Walk Primary School

Lime Walk, Bennetts End, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9LN

**Inspection dates** 26–27 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Not enough pupils make or exceed expected progress by the end of Year 6.
- The progress that pupils make is inconsistent between year groups, especially in mathematics. This is because teaching is not always good.
- In lessons, teachers do not always adjust their planning quickly enough when the work is too easy or too hard for some pupils.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to improve their work by following up the advice given in teachers' marking.
- Leaders' and managers' plans to improve teaching and achievement are not precise enough to ensure rapid improvement in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers have been too slow to check the impact of actions to improve pupils' progress.
- The governing body does not challenge the school leaders with enough rigour and does not have sufficient knowledge of the quality of teaching in different year groups.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from good teaching and make good progress.
- Recent improvements in teaching are having a more positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Governors and staff pay a great deal of attention to ensuring that pupils are well cared for and as a result the school is a friendly, calm and welcoming environment in which to learn.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and happy in the school.
- Teachers all manage behaviour well, and in the same way, and consequently, pupils' behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons. Of these, six were joint observations carried out with the headteacher and senior managers. All of the school’s teachers were observed.
- Inspectors visited some classes to look at how pupils who need extra help are supported, and also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, at lunchtimes and at playtimes. They also met with two groups of pupils they had selected from class registers.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement and policies about keeping pupils safe. The team members also examined the work in some pupils’ books and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special needs co-ordinator, staff responsible for subjects or groups of pupils, members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also analysed responses to a questionnaire of parents’ views undertaken by the school in March 2013.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sherry Gladwin	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- There is a nursery class in the school and 23 children currently attend each morning.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs at school action (pupils who need extra help with their learning) or school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs is greater than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and children known to be eligible for free school meals, is high and almost twice the national average.
- One pupil is taught full time away from the school site at the Collett Special School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- During the current school year, the school has admitted 14 new pupils.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
  - provide activities that are set at just the right level for the pupils so they can make good progress,
  - adjust work during lessons so that all pupils learn quickly and build on what they have previously learnt
  - give pupils time to follow up the advice they are given when their work is marked.
- Improve achievement in mathematics by ensuring that all teachers have the skills to teach the subject well.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - making sure improvement planning incorporates the action plans for English and mathematics and is precise about what actions will take place and when and how the impact will be monitored
  - ensuring that systems for checking on the impact of additional support to improve pupils' progress are more rigorous.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been too low for the past two years. In both 2011 and 2012, pupils left the school the equivalent of at least a term behind pupils nationally in both subjects. Taking account of their different starting points, pupils have not been making enough progress across Years 3 to 6.
- There are some inconsistencies in achievement between classes but overall most pupils are now making better progress. This is because achievement is being monitored more effectively and teachers are now assessing pupils more accurately.
- Pupils join the Nursery class with skills and abilities which are well below those typical for their age. Many pupils make good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the end of the Reception class they are beginning to catch up although they are still behind other pupils nationally.
- Younger pupils are becoming more competent in their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make and this is helping to improve their reading and writing skills. This year, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the national phonics check improved, (this tests their ability to link letters and sounds together), and results are now close to the national expectations for this age group.
- Inspection evidence and school data show that pupils in Year 6 are now achieving standards which are much closer to the national average.
- In English, the number of pupils making the expected progress by the end of Year 6 is improving. This is because the school has created more frequent opportunities for pupils to read and enjoy books and develop their writing skills.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress in mathematics is still too low. This is because in lessons, the work is sometimes too hard or too easy. In both subjects, the proportion of pupils doing better than expected is low.
- The achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding varies from year to year. When those pupils left the school in 2012, they were two years behind other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics. The school has used some of its pupil premium funding to appoint additional teaching assistants to support these pupils in lessons. They are now making much better progress and the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing quickly.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers. They benefit from the extra teaching support they are given which is tailored to their individual needs.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough is consistently good or better. However, over time the quality of teaching has been improving steadily and this is seen in the recent improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not adjust their planning quickly enough when it becomes clear that the work is either too easy or too hard for some of the pupils. For example, in one mathematics lesson in Year 4, many pupils already knew how to write numbers as decimals and fractions and spent too long repeating them.
- In some lessons, the pace of learning drops because the teacher spends too long talking to the class and pupils are not moved on to individual or group work quickly enough.
- While teachers' marking has improved since the last inspection, pupils are not always encouraged to follow up advice. This means they do not get the most from their teachers' comments.

- Teachers create a positive climate for learning so that pupils are eager to learn. The management of behaviour is a strength because the positive relationships and promotion of pupils' personal development successfully encourage them to try hard and work together sensibly. For example in literacy in Year 1, pupils worked well together when making up sentences which included the new words they had learned.
- Where teaching is good, it typically enables the vast majority of pupils to demonstrate good progress through activities which are challenging and pitched at the right level for individuals. Such teaching is engaging and captures the imagination of the pupils well. For example, in a good English lesson in Year 3, the teacher organised the learning so that pupils were enthusiastically engaged in discussing and writing about the dangers of going into a dark tunnel which enabled them to enhance their understanding of persuasive writing.
- Teaching is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and a wide range of interesting activities both indoors and outside capture pupils' interest well and support their learning effectively.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the achievement of the pupils they work with because the class teachers make sure they work closely with them to plan the support they give.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school is a friendly, calm and welcoming environment in which to learn. Pupils are polite and courteous and behave well showing positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of their school and are keen to do well in their lessons.
- Pupils report that they feel safe, secure and happy in school. Parents and carers agree. Pupils display a good sense of how to stay safe, and are knowledgeable for their age about risk and danger.
- Most pupils have a good grasp of the different forms of bullying and name-calling that could occur. The few recorded instances of bullying have been dealt with effectively by the school. Pupils say they are confident that staff will quickly resolve any concerns.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and play a constructive role in the life of the school, for example, through the school council or by leading 'sharing assemblies'.
- Arrangements to support pupils whose needs are complex and make them potentially vulnerable are effective and they mix well with other children in the school. Parents and carers appreciate the good quality of care the school provides.
- All staff manage behaviour consistently well and there are firmly established routines for learning throughout the school. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions and very few fixed term exclusions over recent years.
- The headteacher and governors have taken a strong stance on absence. They now use all the options available to them to try to make sure that all pupils attend school every day. This has resulted in an improvement in attendance although it is still below the national average. A few pupils continue to be absent from school too often but the school is working with families to tackle this.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Since the last inspection, the school's leaders and governing body have not secured the necessary improvements to raise achievement and the quality of teaching to good. Although there have been some improvements in English, too few pupils are making the progress expected of them in mathematics.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and what it needs to improve. The recent reorganisation of the senior leadership team has increased the capacity to make the necessary improvements and has ensured a clear focus on raising achievement. This has already led to improved learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and more opportunities for older pupils to practise their writing.

- The school development plan is not as effective as it could be because it does not set out precisely what will improve, by how much and by when. The English and mathematics subject leaders have begun to create their own action plans but these are not yet incorporated into the school development plan.
- Meetings about pupils' progress enable teachers to review achievement and identify any pupils who may be underachieving. These meetings do not, however, check the impact of additional support in tackling underachievement regularly enough to allow alternative actions to be taken to help pupils make faster progress.
- The management of staff performance is adequate. Teachers have access to regular training opportunities to help them improve their practice. However, leaders are not rigorous enough in checking how well teachers are using what they have learned to improve the way they teach.
- The teachers use a broad range of topics to make learning interesting in a range of subjects. Pupils say they find the work they are set interesting. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the range of experiences offered to pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes and they now benefit from a well organised and exciting range of indoor and outdoor learning activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies are enjoyable occasions where pupils can celebrate each other's successes and value their own achievement. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs, visits and out-of-school activities that they can take part in. They are particularly proud of the school choir which has performed in several large concerts.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school. It has included the school in programmes such as 'keeping your balance' which have helped to improve learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is supportive of the school but does not provide enough challenge to school leaders. There is little evidence of governors asking probing questions relating to pupils' achievement and they are over reliant on information supplied by the headteacher. Their understanding is related mainly to attainment rather than progress, so although they are aware of results over recent years, they are much less familiar with data on pupils' progress from their starting points. Governors know about how much money the school receives through the pupil premium and how it is spent but have not evaluated its impact on improving pupil progress. Although the governing body is involved in discussions relating to managing the performance of staff, including pay awards to individuals, their understanding of the quality of teaching across the school is limited. The governing body makes sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117333
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405697

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Piper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Belgrove
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 262341
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