

# Littlebourne Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 1XS

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 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:

- Improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have yet to be sustained over time in all year groups.
- Although most pupils make satisfactory progress, too few make good progress and standards remain below the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Staff turnover has been a factor in this.
- There is not enough good or outstanding teaching. High expectations for pupils' learning are seen in some classes but not all.
- Teachers are not involved in checking pupils' progress often enough to ensure good levels of challenge for all.
- The pace of learning is not quick enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Teaching does not always afford pupils with sufficient opportunities to be resourceful, creative and independent learners.
- Pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in English. Their lack of mental mathematics in basic skills and too few opportunities to apply their numeracy skills hold them back.
- Expectations for the role and impact of all subject leaders, particularly in how they use the time allocated to them, are not clear enough.
- The governing body has not been rigorous in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are polite, kind and enthusiastic learners. There is a calm, respectful atmosphere in school and pupils care for each other.
- Pupils' well-being has a high priority. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well, particularly through high-quality art provision.
- The uplift in achievement in 2012 driven by the headteacher, seen in Reception, Years 1 and 2 and the increasing standards in writing in Year 6, demonstrate the school's capacity for making further improvements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, teaching assistants were observed providing additional support to groups or individuals. The inspector looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body, and the inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority in a telephone conversation.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of the school's checks on teaching, information on pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Littlebourne is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- 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 as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those that are looked after and those from service families
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There are four classes, each with pupils from two year groups. Some classes have had different teachers to cover for staff leave.
- There is pre-school provision on the school site, which is managed by a private provider and subject to separate inspection arrangements.

### 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 teachers have equally high expectations for what pupils of different abilities can achieve
  - ensuring that the pace of teaching and learning in all lessons promotes rapid progress for all pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to be independent and resourceful in their learning
  - ensuring that teachers are fully involved in checking on pupils' progress in order to make sufficient demands on them throughout lessons.
- Raise standards and ensure that all pupils make good progress by:
  - improving the accuracy and speed of pupils' mental calculations in mathematics
  - providing pupils with appropriate opportunities to practise and apply their numeracy skills in the subjects they study
  - ensuring pupils develop a range of strategies as well as using phonic skills to improve reading so that achievement matches that in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - giving clear direction to subject leaders about their role and responsibilities in improving teaching and its impact on pupils' progress
  - making sure that governors hold leaders to account more effectively for pupils' achievement.

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

- Results in the national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 fluctuate from year to year because of the small and variable numbers in the year groups. However, over the last three years standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English and mathematics have been below average overall.
- The 2013, as yet unpublished, results show a considerable improvement in the standard of writing at the end of Key Stage 2, with the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 much higher than seen previously. However, there was a decline in the proportion reaching the expected level in mathematics. In reading, writing and mathematics in 2013, more pupils reached the higher Level 5 than in previous years. Nevertheless, attainment overall is not high enough because pupils' rate of progress has not been fast enough.
- In English, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' achievement in writing, which is stronger than their achievement in reading. In mathematics, pupils' lack of rapid recall of mental mathematics, calculation skills and ability to apply their numeracy skills are areas holding back their achievement.
- Children start at school in the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are usually at the level expected for their age. Over time, children in the Reception Year have made good progress from their starting points. However, progress is accelerating further as senior leaders' improvement strategies take effect. The majority of children are on track to reach or exceed the expected outcomes by the time they start in Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others; additional support is effective, particularly when they work individually or in small groups outside of lessons because teaching assistants have had lots of training and support to ensure pupils' learning needs are well met.
- In the 2012 national tests, the attainment of the few pupils in Year 6 who received support funded by the pupil premium was 16 months ahead of other pupils in English and over 20 months ahead of their peers in mathematics. In 2013, the very few pupils receiving this funding made similar progress to their peers in writing but less progress in reading and mathematics.
- The scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 at this stage of the school year and information from the school's progress checks show that pupils are on track to accelerate their learning and progress because of raised expectations and strong teaching.
- In the 2012 phonics screening check (linking sounds and letters), the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard was below average. In 2013, the proportion reaching the expected level improved considerably as a result of good quality training for all staff. As a result, the pupils who are currently in Year 2 have a good grasp of phonics to support their improving achievement in reading and writing.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and the older, most able pupils are fluent and expressive readers who can talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and styles of writing. Some less-able readers are over dependent on sounding out unfamiliar words and are not using other strategies to help them make sense of what they are reading.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although there is some good and occasionally outstanding teaching, over time teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. This is, in part, because expectations of what pupils can do are too low and the pace of teaching and learning is not always rapid enough.
- Teaching does not always challenge pupils sufficiently to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. When teaching does make sufficient demand on pupils they respond

well. For example, pupils in Year 1 and 2 produced some very good quality writing in letters they wrote to Goldilocks and were particularly motivated by the teacher's use of role play to help them think of the questions they wanted to ask in their letters.

- Teaching plans are usually detailed with work set that generally matches the needs of learners of different abilities. However, teachers are not involved enough in the analysis of the checks made on pupils' progress to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging and moves their learning forward when ready.
- Work is marked regularly and conscientiously in English and in mathematics, which was an aspect to improve in the previous inspection report. There is a consistent system used by all teachers and understood by pupils. Pupils say that teachers' marking and their comments help them know what to do to improve their work. Teachers give pupils time to respond to their comments for improvement but sometimes at the expense of moving new learning forward at a brisk pace.
- There are very positive relationships between teachers and pupils and as a result, pupils want to do well and are prepared to work hard. However, teachers do not always make the most of pupils' good attitudes to learning and their good behaviour by giving them opportunities to be resourceful and take more responsibility as independent learners. This hampers pupils of all abilities to make more rapid progress, and often the most-able pupils in particular.
- During most lessons, pupils have opportunities to talk together to share their thoughts and ideas to help extend their thinking and learning. They listen to each other well and value others' opinions and views.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly into the routines of the school day and are encouraged to develop independence from the time they start.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and are particularly effective in providing support to the least-able pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who need additional support to 'catch up'. For example, the few pupils who did not achieve the expected level in the phonics screening check in Year 1 are now making good gains as a result of additional support.

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

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils behave equally well in class lessons and when they are working with teaching assistants outside of class lessons. Pupils are polite and kind and get on well with each other. They are very caring, considerate and respectful and have good role models in the school staff to promote and foster these qualities.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning: they are curious and keen to learn. They work well together in lessons and in informal situations during the course of the school day.
- Pupils say they are happy and feel very safe in school. They feel well looked after and cared for. They say that pupils behave well and that they are not aware of any bullying in school. Discussions with different groups of pupils show that they are aware that bullying can take different forms, including cyber bullying.
- They have a good awareness of how to stay healthy and safe, including a good knowledge of e-safety. The good, trusting relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils say that if any incident were to arise or they had any problems, they would be confident to approach any member of staff with their concerns.
- Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life and enjoy coming to school which is reflected in their above average attendance.
- Opportunities for pupils to show greater independence when applying their knowledge are not always provided and this hampers more exemplary learning and behaviour.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to the online survey feel that their children are happy and feel safe at school and most agree that their children are well behaved and are well looked after. Inspections findings support these views and school records show that good behaviour is typical over time.

**The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, despite the small numbers in the year groups, there has not been a sustained trend of improving achievement over time, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1.
- To a large extent, the headteacher, who provides very effective leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, has been thwarted in her plans to ensure more rapid improvement by on-going staffing changes and disruption.
- Nevertheless, strong teaching and leadership in the last two year's Reception class ensured that children made rapid gains in their learning and achieved better outcomes and this is now continuing and being successfully built on in the current mixed Years 1 and 2 class.
- Senior leaders have a clear awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The quality of teaching is checked regularly through robust monitoring. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified support is put in place through training and sharing expertise.
- Systems to track the progress of different groups and individuals give senior leaders good information to use to target resources and support to help pupils, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Expectations are lifting but senior leaders have correctly identified that all staff have yet to be fully effective in using assessment to ensure that appropriate challenges for all pupils lead to consistently rapid progress.
- Effective leadership of literacy and the Early Years Foundation Stage is leading to improvements, particularly in writing across the school and phonics in Key Stage 1. Other subject leaders, as identified by the headteacher, have yet to receive necessary direction and guidance to increase the impact of their work.
- The school promotes equal opportunities and ensures that all pupils have access to the full range of subjects and activities and learn without fear of any type of discrimination.
- A broad curriculum with a good range of sporting and arts activities makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Art is especially strong in the school as well as pupils' personal, social and health education, which underpins the importance the school places on promoting pupils' well-being. All pupils engage in regular physical education lessons, including dance, which pupils enjoy, and understand the benefits of physical activity for staying healthy. There is a good range of additional sports activities in after-school clubs that have a good take up by pupils.
- The school is expecting the new primary school sports funding soon and has already designated some of the funding to participate in a school sports partnership with a local secondary school. There are also plans for training for all staff and acquiring additional resources.
- The local authority has provided a range of support for the school. It has plans for future meetings with the school to discuss its progress but has not, in the past, challenged the school with sufficient rigour.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is committed to the school and the drive for improvement. It has not been as effective as it should have been over time in challenging the school on pupils' achievement although governors are aware of the school's performance compared to all schools nationally through, for example, the data dashboard. There is a full governing body with a waiting list, which indicates the support and reputation the school has in the community. There are several new governors in post and between them there is a range of skills and expertise to support the school. There is a good overview of the impact of spending including the pupil premium funding and the link between teachers' pay and performance and the quality of teaching. The school evaluates the effect of the spending of the pupil premium funding and leaders are aware of which strategies have been successful and which have not. The performance management of teachers takes place, is linked closely to pupils' progress, the school priorities, plans for improvement and teachers' salary progression. The governing body is not yet involved in

decisions for spending the additional primary sports funding as it has not yet been received. Governors regularly visit the school and focus their visits on school improvement priorities. The governing body meets its statutory duties including safeguarding 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118657
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	426479

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Coleman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Reed
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 721671
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