

Larkhill Primary School

Wilson Road, Larkhill, Nr Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 8QB

Inspection dates 13–14 November 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		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

- Standards in writing over time have been too low. The quality of teaching in writing has not enabled pupils to make enough progress in writing.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have on the pupils to plan lessons that provide challenge to all the pupils, especially the more able.
- Teachers do not provide clear targets to the pupils on how to improve their work.
- Pupils' work is not checked well enough within school and with other schools to make sure teachers are clear about pupils' levels and how to move pupils' learning forward.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- School development plans and action plans do not identify clearly how standards in writing are to be improved and lack milestone targets to check progress
- School leaders at all levels need to use the information they hold on pupils more efficiently to closely check the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Governors over time have not provided the challenge to the school leaders for the achievement of pupils, particularly in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards in mathematics and in reading are high and the progress pupils make in these subjects is good or better.
- The care and support the school provides to the pupils is very good, especially when parents are away from home on duty. This has provided reassurance for parents. The relationships with parents are good.
- When pupils' work is well marked, teachers provide clear feedback on how they can make their work better and pupils are then given the opportunity to make their improvements.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and they feel safe and cared for in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons and a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body, and senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of pupils' workbooks.
- A wide range of documents were examined, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, as well as planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector also took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents who were dropping their children off at school and in a short meeting. The views of staff were considered through the 30 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Strange

Additional Inspector

Stuart Sherman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is situated opposite to the Royal School of Artillery garrison in the village of Larkhill. It draws nearly all of its pupils from the families of the service personnel based at the garrison. As a result, the proportion of pupils eligible for extra funding provided for children of service families, looked after children, and those pupils eligible for free school meals (pupil premium) is very high. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is above the national average, as is the number of those who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average. The largest of these groups are of Fijian origin. The numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language is also low.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does have a high turnover of pupils due to the redeployment of parents into the base and on to other postings.
- The school is slightly larger than most primary schools. The school has some mixed year groups due to the variations in caused by the in year movement of pupils as parents move due to redeployment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring:
 - teachers use the information they have on their pupils to plan lesson activities that are closely matched to the needs of different groups of pupils, especially the more able
 - pupils are given specific short-term targets linked to their current learning tasks that show them how to improve and extend their work.
- Improve standards in writing by ensuring:
 - pupils are given more opportunities to develop their skills by writing longer pieces of work in lessons in all subject areas
 - pupils' work is moderated rigorously within school and with other schools to ensure teachers have a clear understanding of where the pupils are and how to move them forwards.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - school development plans and action plans define clearly how initiatives are to bring about improvements and that they have specific measureable points against which outcomes can be addressed.
 - school leaders, at all levels, more effectively monitor the progress that different groups of pupils are making, especially in writing
 - that the governing body is rigorous in its evaluation of the school, particularly in its review of the actions taken by the school to raise standards in writing.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because standards in writing, currently and over time, are too low. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below average and the progress they make over time is slow.
- Pupils' achievement in both mathematics and reading are well above average. Outcomes for more able pupils are good in these subject areas. Current school data indicate that progress for most year groups is good in both reading and mathematics. The rate of progress currently in writing is showing some improvement.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are lower than expected for their age. However they catch up very quickly due to good teaching so that they are generally demonstrating skills typical for their age by the end of the first half term.
- Reading skills are taught well, with increasingly effective phonics work (activities that help pupils recognise the sounds letters make) that is beginning to improve pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 1. Progress in reading is accelerated as pupils move through the school.
- Nearly all pupils are eligible for additional support through pupil premium funding. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals are low. This small group in the most recent national assessments at the end of Year 6 were about a term and a half behind in English and about two terms behind in mathematics. The school population undergoes regular changes as families move into the area or are posted somewhere else. As a result, any identified patterns are somewhat unreliable. What is clear is how well the school uses the additional funding it receives to support the well-being and care of the pupils when parents are away from home.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are well supported in class and in small group work by teaching assistants. As a result, they generally make similar progress to the other pupils in their classes.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has been too variable and has not secured at least expected outcomes in writing. As a result, the progress pupils have made has not been good. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in writing extended in other subjects; consequently, the achievement of groups of pupils, especially the more able, has been too low.
- Teachers do not always use the information as well as they could to ensure activities are not too easy or too difficult so pupils are not always provided with sufficient challenge. In the better lessons, for example in a lesson on fractions in Year 5/6, more able pupils were given good opportunities to progress rapidly to more challenging work whilst those who found the work difficult were well supported by teaching assistants.
- In the Reception classes, phonics teaching is well organised and activities are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. This has provided a better foundation and an improvement in the outcomes in the letters and sounds check in Year 1.
- Teachers try to let pupils know what they will learn in lessons but as pupils do not have clear targets to work towards, they are not always clear on what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils' books show that teachers are providing good guidance on how pupils can improve their work and the pupils are responding to this. However, this is rather inconsistent between classes and is not used in topic work.
- The school uses the local area well to provide interesting tasks for pupils' learning; for example, a good discussion developed in a Year 2 class about a Forest School activity as it drew on the first-hand experience of the pupils themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel safe at school and well looked after by the adults around them. They have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe and understand about being careful when using the internet. Pupils get on well with each other and say there is little in the way of bullying, although pupils can fall out. If pupils do fall out, they are confident that the adults in school will help sort out issues. Parents echo these views and feel their children are very well looked after and make good progress in their lessons.
- Where teaching is better, the pupils get involved in their own learning, discussing work in pairs or in small groups. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils worked well, judging the quality of their own work and that of others. From this, they were able to offer suggestions to their friends on how to improve the piece of work.
- The school has used its additional funding from the pupil premium grant very effectively to support the pupils when parents are deployed away from Larkhill Garrison. The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant has taken a lead in developing an eBluey Club to support pupils who may have a parent away on service. This has enabled the pupils to keep in email contact with parents and to be supported when they may be worried.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of enriching learning activities. The school has worked with a well-known archaeologist to explore the history under the school. This then linked with work with groups of young soldiers who built a Stone Age round house. The pupils talked at length of burying a skeleton with a cup and a wagon wheel biscuit in a burial barrow.
- The pupils enjoy a range of sports and creative clubs that develop other skills and talents. The school employs a teaching assistant to run a Fijian club that celebrates the cultural diversity and supports the integration and welfare of one group of pupils in the school. This is attended by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds as well as Fijian pupils.
- Attendance is a little lower than the national average but the school ensures that absence is kept to a minimum, though naturally supports families with holiday requests when parents return from deployments.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership at all levels has not been successful in improving outcomes for pupils in writing; as a result, over time, achievement has been too low. Although issues in this area have not been effectively addressed from the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in improving the outcomes in mathematics. Work here has been more focused in the approach to secure improvements.
- School development plans and subject action plans lack detail and do not clearly identify milestones that would enable leaders to monitor the progress the school is making to secure improvements. There is no consistent moderation of writing within the school and it does not compare pupils' work with other schools in order that teachers have a clear and accurate view of the levels of pupils' writing. The school has recognised this and is working with the local authority to secure improvements in planning, especially in writing.
- The school holds good information on the progress that pupils are making; however, the school leaders do not use these data efficiently to monitor how well different groups are doing. As a consequence, the school is not able to track the impact of its work on the outcomes of individuals.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with good opportunities to enrich the opportunities for pupils through residential trips and visits to places of significance. Awareness of other cultures taught in lessons and through celebrations that explore the diversity of the school community ensures the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is effective and challenges intolerance and unacceptable attitudes that pupils may come across.
- The quality of teaching is monitored closely and has identified areas to develop further, especially in Key Stage 1. The school uses performance management systems to make sure that

staff progression and salary increases are linked to outcomes for pupils.

- Additional funding for those entitled to support through the pupil premium is effectively managed. The plans to use the sports funding are in place and indicate that that the funding is to be spent to raise the skills of staff, which is felt to be key. Running alongside this, funding has been targeted to raise both participation and excellence, for example in the recruitment of a judo coach to move some talented pupils on further. Systems to review the impact are in place.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have been very supportive of the school in the past but have yet to demonstrate a consistent level of challenge in their monitoring of the achievement of pupils. As a result, outcomes in writing do not match those in reading and mathematics. Recent changes in the focus of the governing body indicate governors are now more aware of the roles they have and they are now formalising their visits to the school. Governors review the reports from the headteacher and local authority to get an overview of the quality of teaching and learning. Training is now being accessed to raise their skills and they are developing a better understanding of how well pupils are doing compared with the national averages. Governors are aware of the performance management arrangements in school and how targets are set to improve pupil outcomes. They know about the plans for spending the sports funding; however, they have yet to formalise the way this is to be monitored. Similarly, they are aware of the allocation of pupil premium, but are still developing their overview of the impact of the funding. The governors monitor the financial position of the school carefully and audit the safeguarding arrangements in the school to ensure pupils are kept safe.

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	126202
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	426821

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	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toby Harden
Headteacher	Stephen Norton
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 December 2008
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