

Long Mead Community Primary School

Waveney Road, Tonbridge, TN10 3JU

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is rightly proud of its success in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils now achieve well. Their attainment has been rising steadily over the past five years, reaching national averages for the past two years. They make good progress in English and mathematics. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The quality of teaching has improved over time and is consistently good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They provide good role models for pupils, and relationships within the school are very positive.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and feel very safe.
- The principal of the federation and the head of school are strongly committed to providing the best education for the community. Their vision for the school's future is shared by the whole staff and morale is high.
- Governors have a thorough knowledge of the school's work and play an effective part in school development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to secure the highest levels of achievement.
- The level of challenge in lessons does not always meet the needs of more-able pupils.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' marking in English is not as thorough as it is in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or part-lessons, including three lesson observations carried out jointly with the head of school.
- Discussions were held with the head of school, the principal of the federation, four members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and carers and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the online Parent View survey and 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and listened to four pupils read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gianni Bianchi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium in this school is above the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families).
- The great majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus is above average.
- The school is part of a federation with the Hugh Christie Technology College and works closely with Little Foxes Children's Centre. The principal of the federation is based at the Hugh Christie Technology College and the head of school is based at Long Mead Community Primary School.
- The school has a breakfast club which is managed by the school and was included in this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to secure the highest levels of achievement, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - more-able pupils are promptly moved on to more challenging tasks when they have grasped a concept or skill
 - marking is used consistently well in different subjects, so that pupils are always clear about what they need to do next to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- There has been a year-on-year improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 for the past five years because the quality of teaching has improved. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing and particularly good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in reading. In response, the school has put in place a range of initiatives to improve pupils' writing skills. For example, in the older year groups, pupils are taught higher-level punctuation and sentence construction. As a result, attainment in writing has improved. In 2013 pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 6 reached national averages.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has steadily improved over the past three years. As a result, pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2013 was closer to the national average than it had been for the past five years.
- Children's skills and understanding when they join the Nursery class are usually well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in speaking and language skills. Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of carefully planned and stimulating activities provided in the Nursery and Reception classes. Strong teamwork and skilful teaching, especially in the Nursery class, ensure that children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- The teaching of reading, including the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make), has improved since the last inspection when the teaching of phonics was identified as a key issue for development. Pupils read regularly to an adult and phonics is taught flexibly across the school according to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading has improved. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check increased in 2013 to above average levels.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Resources are used well to support them, and their progress is regularly checked by teachers and leaders to ensure that they are achieving well.
- In 2013, the attainment of those pupils eligible for support provided by pupil premium funding was behind that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, they made similar progress from their starting points to other pupils in the school. This is because extra help is carefully tailored to meet their individual needs, and the school regularly checks progress and makes changes to the support provided as their needs change.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and mathematics were below average in 2013. The achievement of more-able pupils has been rightly identified by the school as a key development priority. Teachers' increased expectations and better subject knowledge have helped more-able pupils to make better progress than previously. However, the school recognises there is still more to do to ensure that these pupils reach their full potential.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Teachers are confident about their teaching and have high expectations of their pupils to do their best, regardless of ability or background.
- Interesting lessons are planned carefully. This was reflected by one pupil, who said, 'We like school, especially mathematics, because our teacher makes learning fun!'
- In Nursery and Reception classes, children of all backgrounds and abilities happily participate in a wide range of activities because they feel valued and secure. As a result, children rapidly develop confidence and independence.
- Teachers skilfully use questioning to check and add to pupils' understanding. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5/6, the teacher quickly picked up and addressed pupils' confusion about ordering decimals so that they could successfully get on with the next task.

- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and support pupils well. As a result, those pupils working with teaching assistants, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make similar progress to their classmates.
- An increased drive to meet the needs of pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding means that teaching is more sharply matched to their needs. As a result, their progress is accelerating.
- In mathematics, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use their knowledge and so strengthen their understanding. However, occasionally when more-able pupils have successfully completed a task, they are not moved on to the next task quickly enough.. This does not provide them with sufficient challenge to extend and deepen their learning and make the progress they are capable of.
- The teaching of reading has improved because pupils are taught the key skills needed to read, such as comprehension skills, more regularly and systematically. The teaching of phonics is characterised by high expectations and clear instructions. Additional support for individual pupils ensures that pupils make good progress in the development of basic reading and writing skills.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give them guidance about how they can improve in mathematics. This has helped to improve the quality of their presentation. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to help pupils to improve their written work in English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Long Mead is a warm and welcoming school with a friendly and inclusive ethos. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they are keen to do well.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are confident in making contributions during lessons because they know their views will be valued by their classmates and their teachers. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View consider their children to be safe, happy and well looked after.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved, but it is not yet outstanding because pupils sometimes lose concentration during lessons, particularly when the work set for them is not challenging enough. On these occasions, their attention wanders and their progress slows. They behave well during playtimes and when moving around the school, enjoy spending time with each other and show respect for adults. Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that pupils are well behaved.
- School records and pupils' comments during the inspection show that bullying is uncommon. Pupils know what bullying is and are confident that adults will sort out any concerns quickly and carefully. School records indicate that any allegations of bullying are followed up promptly and carefully. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Pupils are kept safe and secure, and they have a sensible view of their own responsibilities in reducing risk. For example, they know what they can do to help stay safe when using the internet.
- The school's focus on improving attendance has been successful. As a result, attendance levels have steadily improved and are in line with the national average. The breakfast club is well organised and provides pupils with a positive start to the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have very successfully established a culture of high aspirations for all pupils. The school's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils underpins the school's strong ethos of care, and has made an important contribution to improving pupils' achievement.
- The successful drive to improve the quality of teaching has been sustained over an extended period of time and has resulted in year-on-year improvements in pupils' achievement. The school's track record of improvements in the quality of teaching and improved pupils'

achievement over time demonstrate secure capacity for further improvement.

- The school's work in partnership with the local authority, with other schools in the area, and within the federation, is a particular strength. Long Mead has worked closely with Hugh Christie Technology College to share resources and good practice across both schools. The partnership has made a very positive contribution to increasing teachers' expectations and improving the quality of teaching.
- External support has been provided by the local authority, including a review of the quality of teaching and learning in October 2013 with pointers for further improvement.
- The school makes regular checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and has an accurate view of its strengths and development needs as a result. Middle leaders play an effective role in school improvement and make an increasingly active and successful contribution to school improvement.
- The curriculum is interesting, with many links between subjects to make learning meaningful. It makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding. Trips and visits enrich pupils' learning and broaden their experiences.
- Sports funding has been allocated appropriately to increase pupils' engagement and enjoyment of sport. For example, the range of clubs provided at the end of the school day has increased, and pupil participation is higher by 25% since last year. Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge have been developed through their observation of specialist coaches teaching physical education lessons during the school day.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs because they are well informed by leaders, and they regularly visit the school. Their role has developed over the last three years. Effective training means that governors have an accurate view of pupils' achievement in relation to other schools nationally. They provide good levels of challenge for leaders and are passionate about the school's work. For example, governors ask pertinent questions about the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those eligible for support from pupil premium funding. Governors are knowledgeable about how performance management is used to reward good practice and to support developments in teaching. Their commitment to address the recommendations raised by the recent review of the governing body's work underlines their determination to play a full and effective part in further developments. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 118575 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 426650 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 150 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Lesley Broom |
| Headteacher | Mrs Joanna Powell |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 December 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01732 350601 |
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