

Larkrise Primary School

Dorset Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 9UB

Inspection dates

11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- In the past, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 has not been consistently good; as a consequence, these pupils have not reached the standards of which they are capable.
- In 2013, attainment by the end of Year 6 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Few pupils attained the higher National Curriculum levels.
- While teaching has improved, the planned work for the most-able pupils is not always sufficiently demanding and this hinders their progress.
- There are some variations in the quality of pupils' handwriting, presentation and spelling.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are not yet fully involved in checking assessments, teaching and the impact of initiatives on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception get off to a good start and make good progress. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2.
- The headteacher, leaders and staff are taking positive action to strengthen teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6. As a result, pupils' progress is improving.
- In the main, pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Leaders and staff have created a safe and welcoming environment where pupils can learn and develop.
- There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils feel well looked after, and parents also have positive views about the care provided for their children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, members of the governing body and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and correspondence from parents.
- Pupils were heard to read and discussions were held with them about their reading.
- Questionnaires from 25 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's development planning.
- One of Her Majesty's Inspectors made a further visit to the school on 5 March in order to complete the inspection.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Other pupils are from a wide range of ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- A well above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A new deputy headteacher started in September 2013. The Year 5 teacher left in December 2013 and this class is currently taught by temporary teachers.
- The local authority carried out a review of the school on 5 February 2014 with teaching and learning as the focus.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching provides a suitable level of challenge for the most-able pupils so that they reach higher standards by the end of Year 6.
- Achieve consistency across the school in the quality of pupils' handwriting, presentation and spelling.
- Improve the subject leadership in subjects other than English and mathematics so that they are fully engaged in checking teachers' assessments of how well their pupils are doing, the quality of teaching and the impact of initiatives on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, pupils' progress has improved in Years 1 and 2 but it has been more variable in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have not reached the standards they were capable of by the end of Year 6. There are gaps in pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy, due to weaker teaching in the past, and this continues to hinder pupils from making more rapid progress.
- In 2013, Year 6 results were below average in writing and mathematics. Reading was closer to the national average. While the proportion of pupils making expected progress was broadly in line with or above the national figures, not enough pupils made more than expected progress.
- Few Year 6 pupils attained the higher levels in 2013. The school's internal data shows that, compared with last year, more pupils are currently expected to attain higher levels at the end of Year 6. However, in a few lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the most-able pupils were not provided with sufficiently demanding work and this hindered their more rapid progress.
- Positive and decisive action is being taken to accelerate pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 but this has yet to be confirmed by better results in attainment and progress measures at the end of Year 6. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now making good progress in lessons because of improvements in the quality of teaching. This is helping them to make up for lost ground in their previous learning. Attainment in the current Year 6 is on track to be broadly average by summer 2014. The progress of Year 5 pupils is beginning to improve. This group's progress has been hampered with changes in staff this school year.
- In 2013, the Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards than the others in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils were 12 months behind the others in writing, 10 months behind in reading and eight months behind in writing. Across the school, the gap between these groups of pupils and others is now narrowing because of improved teaching and more effective support.
- Children start in Reception with skills and experiences below those typical for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching, effective support and the interesting activities provided. Children make good progress in early reading skills. They use interesting items and learning resources in developing counting and number. Children showed imagination in making colourful models of Chinese dragons and Chinese lanterns.
- Pupils' good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. In 2013, attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Most groups are now making good progress in reading. The results of the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) reading check for Year 1 in 2013 were close to average. Pupils in Year 6 applied their reading and research skills well in geography as they found the best coastal locations for activities such as bird watching, walking and rock climbing.
- Pupils' writing is improving. Good-quality discussion and planning of their ideas are having a positive impact on pupils' writing. Pupils in Year 1 made good progress in writing interesting information about the Isle of Coll. In Year 3, pupils used adjectives and alliteration to good effect in planning and writing poems. However, there is wide variation in the quality of pupils' handwriting, presentation and spelling.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress is improving. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress in gathering

and recording data. They presented their data in a bar chart and began to interpret their findings. By Year 6, pupils are handling more complex data.

- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. They receive effective guidance and support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education lessons and the additional adventurous and sporting activities provided. Pupils enjoy participating in activities such as dance, football, zumba and cross-country running.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved and is now mostly good. However, some aspects of teaching still need strengthening. In a few lessons, tasks are not demanding enough to extend and stretch the most-able pupils.
- Where teachers' marking is most effective, teachers praise pupils' good-quality work and give clear guidance to help pupils improve. Pupils are set individual learning targets for writing and mathematics so they know what they are aiming for.
- There is a clear school policy for handwriting and presentation but it is not being consistently applied. As a result, pupils' handwriting and presentation varies. In some cases, pupils' work is of a high quality and clearly shows care and pride; in others, teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- Teachers and support staff establish good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. In most cases, teachers expect the pupils to do their best and the pupils respond accordingly.
- In Reception, teachers balance a mix of adult-led activities with those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to be creative, explore and find things out for themselves, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- The teaching of reading is given good attention. Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have regular sessions to consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding of phonics.
- Pupils' writing is developing through good use of discussion and interesting planning techniques. In the best lessons, teachers use demonstration well in writing, providing accurate spellings and interesting sentences to guide the pupils. Where teachers' mathematical knowledge is good, pupils successfully acquire new knowledge and deepen their understanding of mathematical operations.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching. In a highly effective mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils made rapid progress in interpreting data. They rose to the teacher's high expectations and to the challenge of the tasks set. The teacher used questioning and feedback skilfully to move pupils' learning on and, by the end of the lesson, pupils demonstrated an extremely good understanding of mean, median and mode.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. Pupils who need additional help with literacy and numeracy, including those supported by the pupil premium, receive well-targeted guidance and support from teaching assistants and,

consequently, progress well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Children in Reception have settled into school well because of good induction arrangements and the strong relationships established between adults and the children. Children are eager to learn and participate in the interesting activities provided. They share learning resources. The children are well behaved and make good progress in their personal and social development.
- In the rest of the school, pupils show enthusiasm and a keen interest in their learning. Behaviour is good around the school and in most lessons. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour are contributing to the better progress being made. The school's records indicate that pupils' behaviour is typically good.
- In just a few lessons, pupils do not maintain their concentration because they receive insufficient guidance and direction about how to tackle the work set for them.
- Pupils at Larkrise are courteous, friendly and considerate to others. They say that everyone is friendly and that they make 'lots of friends'. They take on additional responsibilities, such as serving on the school council. Through their studies, pupils have gained a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. For example, children in Reception gained much knowledge about the customs and traditions for Chinese New Year.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Almost all parents who completed the online survey agreed that their children feel safe at school and are well looked after. Pupils themselves told the inspectors that they felt safe and well looked after by staff. They added, 'Teachers are always there when you need them.'
- In a successful assembly, pupils responded very well to the headteacher's clear introduction and slides illustrating the key points of internet safety. Pupils were engaged and participated well in the proceedings. This was an example of how the importance of internet safety is promoted effectively at school.
- Discussions with pupils show that they have a clear understanding of bullying, including persistent name-calling and cyber-bullying. They reported that bullying in the school is very rare in the school and were confident that such behaviour would be swiftly dealt with.
- In recent years, pupils' attendance levels have been average. Attendance is now rising because of the more rigorous action taken by the school to check up on absences.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have been successful in implementing measures to secure pupils' good achievement from Reception to the end of Year 2. They have successfully improved pupils writing in Key Stage 1 which was a key issue in the previous inspection. This school is securely on its way to becoming a good school.
- The senior leadership team has rightly made good achievement for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 a priority. The impact of new approaches in teaching and learning is showing in pupils' written work but are yet to be confirmed by test results at the end of Year 6. New teachers in Years 3 to

6, including the recently appointed deputy headteacher, are having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and their progress.

- Subject leaders in English and mathematics are effective. They check the accuracy of assessments and other aspects of teaching thoroughly. They use data advantageously to identify where changes in the level of support are required, take the necessary action, and then measure the impact of new initiatives on pupils' progress to see that they are working. Leadership in other subjects is not as advanced.
- The school's leaders have created a positive, safe and welcoming atmosphere. Good partnerships have been established with parents. Leaders have rightly focused on improving teaching and learning.
- There are good procedures for appraising the performance of teachers. Training and improvement targets are linked to pupils' progress and key improvement priorities. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching. Teaching has also been reviewed by the local authority. Teachers have benefited from training programmes provided to enhance teaching skills.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate range of subjects and topics. Pupils enjoy the additional activities, such as clubs and educational visits. The primary school sport funding is being used effectively to extend pupils' opportunities in areas such as dance and outdoor adventures. It is also used well for training to extend the skills of teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school has a positive, purposeful and welcoming atmosphere. There are no signs of discrimination at Larkrise. All pupils are valued and have full access to the activities on offer.
- The pupil premium funding is properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support. Improved class teaching, one-to-one tuition and small-group teaching are having a positive impact on the progress of those eligible for the funding.
- The local authority has provided good support. In a recent review of the school, the local authority judged the school's overall effectiveness as not yet securely good. Clear improvements points were provided to assist the school's progress towards good. There has been good support for the Early Years Foundation Stage team. The school has taken advantage of a range of training opportunities provided by the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive of the headteacher and the school. They show a clear understanding of the school's information about attainment and progress. They are kept well informed about improvements to teaching and to pupils' progress. However, they are less clear about how the school's overall effectiveness compares with that of other schools. The governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures and ensure that promotion and pay awards are based on the progress that pupils make.
 - Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is used wisely and check the impact of the funding on pupils' progress. They have attended a range of useful courses to help them in their role. All safeguarding procedures meet current government 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	115035
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	431614

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Hodson
Headteacher	Janice Butterworth
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2012
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