

# Lynsted and Norton Primary School

Lynsted Lane, Lynsted, Sittingbourne, ME9 0RL

**Inspection dates** 21–22 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress because there are variations in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Writing has, over time, been the weakest element, although improvements are now coming through.
- Pupils' progress is only just at the level expected in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- There are still gaps between the attainment of pupils supported by pupil premium funding and that of others, even though the school's plan for supporting these pupils has improved.
- Leadership over time has not done enough to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress and attain higher standards.
- Staff who are new to leading individual subjects have not all yet developed their leadership roles fully, so that their impact remains limited. Not all subjects are as well developed as literacy and numeracy.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in Reception and mostly leave with knowledge and skills above those expected.
- Standards have risen this year, particularly at the end of Year 6. Older pupils are making much better progress than before.
- Reading is now taught effectively.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, and feel very safe. Approaches to behaviour management have improved considerably.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well.
- The leadership team, in particular the head of school, is giving the school a clear direction, so that pupils' achievement is now improving. Systems for the improvement of teaching are robust and increasingly effective.
- Governance has improved following reorganisation. Governors now provide good challenge to leaders and play a full part in improving the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons, all of which were seen together with the head of school.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and the school's senior and subject leaders.
- The inspector took account of the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were 38 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, the inspector took account of a recent parental survey conducted by the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. He also looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year, and listened to pupils read.

## Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Lynsted and Norton Primary School is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there are a few pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals or those looked after by the local authority, is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lynsted and Norton Primary School formed a hard federation with two other village primary schools from October 2007. This federation converted to become The Village Academy Trust from September 2011. The Village Academy Trust has a particular commitment to ensuring the viability and sustainability of traditional village schools. Two other schools have since joined the trust. An Executive Principal is in overall charge of the trust, with separate heads of school on each site. The current head of school took up post in April 2013.
- The academy trust governance was substantially restructured from December 2013, with a central board of directors and local advisory committees for each school.
- When the predecessor school was last inspected, on 23 March 2011, it was judged to be good.
- There are six classes. All pupils, other than those in Years 4 and 5, are taught in discrete year groups. All teaching staff are new to the school in the last two years.
- The school hosts an independent pre-school on its site. This is managed and inspected separately.
- The school offers daily breakfast and late-stay clubs which were looked at as part of this inspection.

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

- Improve teaching further so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - teachers across the school have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to achieve.
- Improve achievement so that it is consistently good across the school, ensuring that:
  - all pupils, particularly those in Years 1 and 2, make rapid progress, especially in writing
  - standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at least in line with the national average
  - the remaining inconsistencies in the progress and attainment of pupils supported by additional funding are eliminated.
- Ensure that recent improvements in the leadership and management of the school are sustained, so that:
  - the remaining issues of underperformance are tackled
  - those middle leaders who are new to their role receive the training and development to enable them to have greater impact on their area of responsibility
  - pupils gain a greater depth and understanding of a wider range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across the school is not yet consistent enough for overall achievement to be judged as good. In general, those in Reception and Years 4 to 6 are currently making the best progress. Nonetheless, writing remains the relatively weaker element.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average. While this reflects a modest increase in attainment year on year, it still represents only just expected progress, given that a proportion of children leave Reception with above average knowledge and skills.
- Year 6 pupils supported by additional funding in 2013 were around two years behind their classmates in English and mathematics. However, these data were skewed because of the low number of pupils and the characteristics of the group. Typically, the gap is much smaller than this, although attainment remains variable. Across the school, funded pupils benefit from increasingly well-targeted support and currently make progress similar to their classmates.
- Inaccuracies in historic Year 2 information about pupils' attainment and progress, identified by the local authority, have made the evaluation of pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 unreliable in recent years. However, these issues have now worked through, so that current measures of achievement are considered accurate.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved considerably from a low point in 2013 and is currently broadly average. Progress has improved across Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils are making good progress in reading and their progress is at least at the expected level in mathematics and writing. A school-wide focus on writing and specialist teaching in mathematics for the more-able pupils are contributing to accelerated progress, with some pupils, for example, working at the highest level (Level 6) in mathematics.
- Children start in Reception with skills mostly in line with those expected for their age. With generally good teaching, they make good progress, so that their skills are mostly above average by the time they join Year 1. Staff assessments of children's knowledge and skills are accurate.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in the screening check in phonics (sounds that letters make) exceeded the national average in 2013. Effective teaching of phonics is contributing to an improvement in pupils' reading skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. With more accurate identification of individual needs and intensive training of teaching assistants to improve their effectiveness, supported pupils are now making better progress from their starting points.
- The few pupils from Gypsy/Roma backgrounds attend frequently and achieve standards only slightly below those typically achieved by other pupils.
- More-able pupils are being given increasingly challenging work. They make good progress and now reach higher standards than previously.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Weaker teaching in the past has affected learning and progress. Leaders have taken steps to tackle inadequate teaching. However, there are still pockets of weaker practice where pupils make slower progress.
- Whilst a significant proportion of teaching is now good and progress more rapid, teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work is not always challenging enough and this adversely affects progress. Not all teaching captures pupils' enthusiasm to learn sufficiently.
- The school sets clear expectations as to how pupils' work will be presented. In general, teachers set appropriate expectations of pupils' written work.
- The checking of and support for pupils' progress have improved. There is good practice in the marking of pupils' work, with identification of the next steps that pupils need to take to move

their learning on.

- Children’s learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is mostly good. The classroom promotes awareness of language well, with activities providing appropriate challenge to engage children’s interest.
- Although outcomes remain inconsistent, pupils supported by additional funding benefit from well-targeted adult support linked to careful tracking of their progress.
- When teaching is most effective, pupils learn well. In an effective literacy session in Years 4 and 5, pupils were preparing to write a narrative poem, based on recent work on monsters. Pupils were enthusiastic and involved, as they generated new ideas for their work. Pupils of all abilities were successfully included. As a result, learning was good.
- Effective teaching of reading skills means that pupils make increasingly rapid progress in reading.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils display positive attitudes and are motivated and engaged in lessons, particularly when the teaching is good. They cooperate and work together readily. This supports increasingly rapid progress in lessons. Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils’ attention wanders in those lessons where the teaching is less effective.
- Inappropriate behaviour and exclusions are now rare. Effective systems ensure a consistent response to any issues. The work of the family liaison officer has contributed to greater engagement by particular pupils and their families. No parents indicated significant concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils respond well to the school behaviour policy. Where behavioural concerns arise, school leaders respond rapidly. Increased adult presence in the playground has produced a decrease in incidents. A ‘quiet club’ supports pupils who find the playground a challenge.
- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and recognise that the school site is very safe.
- The school ensures that pupils recognise a range of risks. Year 6 pupils undertake cycle training and learn about the dangers of cyber bullying. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils recognise that bullying may take many forms, but do not see it as an issue. They feel that any problems will be addressed by the school.
- Attendance has improved and is currently above average.
- The well-managed breakfast and after-school clubs provide well for those pupils who arrive early at school or who stay late. They have access to an appropriate range of activities.

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

- Until the last year, leadership had had limited impact upon the pace of improvement in pupils’ achievement. This resulted in some underperformance over time.
- Middle leaders who take charge of individual subjects are relatively new to their responsibilities and are at an early stage in developing their leadership skills, so that their impact is not consistently strong.
- The Executive Principal provides strong leadership. The evolving leadership structure within the academy trust is providing greater depth in the leadership of all the schools and increased capacity to drive essential improvements in teaching and achievement. The deployment of the current, highly effective head of school, supported by the deputy principal, and the clear trend of improvement currently are enabling this school to turn the corner.
- Staff benefit from the opportunity to share best practice within the academy trust. There are good opportunities for the professional development of individual heads of school and of other

specialist staff who may be deployed to influence teaching and learning in other schools.

- Current leaders have an informed overview of the quality of teaching. Checks on the quality of teaching are thorough, taking account of all aspects of a teacher's work.
- Systems for managing staff performance are rigorous and teachers have challenging targets, supported by good training opportunities. There is a close match between teachers' performance and their pay progression.
- The school judges itself accurately and improvement plans identify the correct priorities.
- School leaders monitor the impact of pupil premium funding closely. They recognise that there is further work to do to close the achievement gap between funded pupils and their contemporaries. They ensure that additional teaching is provided for pupils at risk of falling behind.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. The school prioritises literacy and numeracy to boost achievement in these areas. The development of other subjects is less consistent and the school recognises the need for more scientific activities. Extra-curricular and enrichment provision is good.
- Planning for the use of the primary sport funding is effective. Targeted staff training ensures that initiatives are sustainable. Additional clubs allow more pupils to participate in sporting activities.
- Until recently, the academy trust had been slow to respond to lacklustre performance. It has now developed increasingly effective strategies for securing vital improvements.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision to support multicultural awareness has improved. Partnerships with other schools contribute well to staff development and pupils' learning. Links with parents have improved significantly. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has undergone recent change as the academy trust has introduced local advisory bodies, with a strategic board of directors. Directors bring considerable commitment and ensure a clear strategic direction. They engage fully in school self-evaluation and development planning. They undertake training regularly and have a thorough understanding of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools, making good use of available data. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors hold school leaders fully to account, including termly 'challenge' meetings for each head of school. Governors are committed to tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. They have a close understanding of the quality of teaching. They ensure that pay and promotion are closely aligned to teachers' effectiveness. Governors understand the impact of decisions about the use of additional funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement, while recognising that the achievement of these pupils is not yet fully aligned with the others. Governors and senior leaders ensure that all statutory duties are met.

## 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>	137467
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	439964

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>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of Directors
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Pearmain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Harrison (Head of School)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 521362
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 522516
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@lynsted-norton.kent.sch.uk



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