

The Leverton Junior School

Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BE

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

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

- Some pupils still do not make as much progress as they could in reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics.
- Too much teaching requires improvement in lower Key Stage 2. Teachers do not always plan activities at the right level for pupils.
- The most-able pupils are not always set tasks that really stretch them, so they do not make as much progress as they could. The least-able pupils are not always expected to tackle tasks that will move them on quickly.
- Leaders do not always analyse information on how well pupils are doing carefully enough so they can judge the quality of teaching more accurately. School leaders are too generous when predicting the standards that pupils will reach when they leave school.
- Pupil-premium funding has not been used as effectively as it could be to close the attainment gap between those known to be eligible and the others quickly.
- Governors have not challenged the school strongly enough about the effectiveness of the school's actions on the standards pupils reach and the progress they make.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is improving, particularly in Year 6.
- The Leverton Junior School is a warm and welcoming place where pupils are happy and feel safe. Teachers are enthusiastic and have developed warm relationships with pupils, who feel valued.
- The quality of teaching is improving and some is outstanding. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well. They invariably have positive attitudes to learning and get along with each other and their teachers well.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including through assemblies, lessons and clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons, including four which were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They also looked at pupils' written work in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and seven other governors, the headteacher and other school leaders, and with a representative of the local authority. An inspector spoke by telephone to an external adviser - the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors spoke formally to two groups of pupils, and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading, talked to them about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Several of the school's documents were examined. These included: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils' progress and the support given to pupils with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about the quality of teaching; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), one letter from a parent and the views expressed by parents as they arrived to drop off their children.
- An inspector analysed 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Philip Scull	Additional Inspector
Liz Kissane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Leverton Junior School is an average-sized primary school. There are three classes in Year 6 and two classes in each of the other year groups.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Fewer pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or from a family with a parent in the armed forces) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs an after-school club each afternoon at the end of the school day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better in all years to raise the achievement of all pupils by:
 - making sure that teachers plan activities and tasks that really stretch the most-able pupils and are suitably demanding for less-able pupils
 - making sure teachers move pupils on to more challenging work as soon as they are ready
 - using the best teaching practice that exists, particularly in the upper school, in such things as marking and questioning, to improve the quality of teaching across all years.
- Ensure that all pupils make good progress in reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics by:
 - encouraging pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics and other subjects
 - identifying more quickly what weaker readers and those who struggle with English grammar, punctuation and spelling can and cannot do well and then setting work for them at the right level
 - ensuring teachers listen to weaker readers reading regularly.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving leaders' analysis of pupils' progress and attainment
 - helping governors to assess the impact of the school's initiatives on pupils' progress.
- An external review of governance, including the use of the pupil premium, 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

- In 2013, some pupils were not making good enough progress in reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics. Fewer pupils than could attained the age-expected standards by the end of Year 6. The most-able pupils did not make enough progress in these subjects, particularly in mathematics, and some reached lower standards in Year 6 than expected.
- Currently, pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics, particularly in Year 6, where improved targeted support for identified individuals and extra teaching groups are effective in promoting better achievement. However, pupils' progress in mathematics is not as good as in English.
- Pupils' knowledge of number facts is adequate and some know their multiplication tables well, in part through competitions to complete 'times-table' grids quickly. However, because they have fewer opportunities to practise their skills, pupils' understanding of how to apply this knowledge to practical or real-life problems is not secure.
- The attainment gap for the school's less advantaged pupils has not been closing quickly enough. The gap between pupils supported through pupil -premium funding and other pupils in the 2013 national tests was about three terms. Previously, in 2012, it was only one term in mathematics and virtually closed in English. However, a sizeable group of pupils join the school at points other than Year 3 and some eligible pupils do not benefit fully from the extra support available. The gap for current pupils has reduced again and is expected to be similar to 2012 levels.
- The school encourages pupils to read widely and often. Parents and adult volunteers listen to pupils read regularly. The assessment of how well these pupils read, and of the support the weaker readers need to improve quickly, are not sharp enough. Teachers do not listen to individual readers who are underperforming often enough.
- From current work seen, some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are not making as much progress as they could. Recent changes to the organisation of support for this group of pupils have increased their rate of progress but this improvement is not consistent across all year groups yet.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is improving. In 2013, pupils made good progress and reached a similar standard to the national average. However, in current written work seen, there were too many errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar. Pupils are given good opportunities in their 'purple' books for extended writing in a wide range of subjects and for different purposes.
- School performance information shows that the progress pupils in all year groups make in reading and mathematics has improved this year.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much of the teaching requires improvement. While much of the teaching is good in the upper school and some is outstanding, this has not been enough to compensate for the slower progress some pupils make in the lower school. Here, teachers do not always plan tasks and activities that are pitched at the right level for pupils to move forward quickly.

- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work are not always high enough. The most-able pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy for them so they make less progress than they should.
- Teachers do not always assess accurately how well pupils are doing so that some pupils continue with activities they have already mastered rather than moving on to something more challenging.
- Teachers always share the purpose of each lesson with pupils as well as the expected learning outcomes, although these are not always specific enough and pupils are not always sure how well they have done.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and all provide encouraging feedback. Some teachers include constructive comments that indicate what the pupil needs to do to improve their work. Some teachers extend pupils' understanding by writing challenging follow-up questions that pupils respond to promptly. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved and some aspects of effective teaching are evident in all classes. Teachers are enthusiastic and have established good relationships with their pupils. They model expected behaviour well in their interactions with pupils and other adults and generally manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. The way that teachers question pupils to encourage them to think is very good in some cases.
- Classrooms have lively displays with helpful advice and examples of pupil's work that stimulate and support pupils' learning well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They like their teachers and get on well with classmates. They enjoy coming to school and say their lessons are fun and interesting. Parents say their children are happy at school.
- Behaviour at play times and around the school is nearly always good. For example, during a wet break when pupils remained inside the building, they behaved extremely well. Some pupils, acting as monitors, toured the building to ensure the best behaviour was maintained. Pupils are polite to others, including visitors, whom they welcome and greet pleasantly.
- Behaviour is well managed by school staff and incidents of misbehaviour are recorded well. The few incidents of poor behaviour are resolved quickly.
- Pupils understand bullying and its different forms well. They and their parents say that bullying is uncommon and their teachers sort it out quickly.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are attentive in class and cooperate with one another when working in groups or sharing ideas with their 'learning partners.' Occasionally, when work is too easy or boring some pupils lose concentration and become restless.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Health and safety are promoted well and pupils say they feel safe and well cared for at school.

- Pupils can explain what is meant by a healthy diet and the need for regular exercise. They appreciate the importance of learning how to swim and the opportunities the school provides for swimming. Regular visitors, such as members of the police and fire services, tell them how to keep safe on the road and in the event of fire.
- Child-protection guidelines are followed closely and teachers and other adults, such as the school nurse, are appropriately trained to be vigilant for any signs of abuse or neglect. The site is securely fenced and identity checks are carried out on all visitors.
- Attendance figures have been close to the national average in the over the last three years. This year so far, attendance is above average. The school celebrates good attendance, including by naming the best attending class and pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance each half term in the weekly newsletter. Book vouchers are awarded to pupils with full attendance during the year. Absences are followed up promptly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet robust enough, although it has improved with support from an external consultant and the local authority. Leaders' views of pupils' progress and learning, particularly of the most-able pupils, are too generous. Consequently, pupils are thought to be doing better than they really are.
- The school has taken a number of actions to improve teaching. Suitable training courses have been taken, some teachers have visited other schools, including seeing outstanding teaching practice, and the headteacher has tackled inadequate teaching successfully. However, leaders are not yet assessing all teaching as accurately as they might because the progress pupils make is not always evaluated well enough.
- The school's self-evaluation is based on a clear knowledge of the areas of strength and weakness of the school and the priorities in the school improvement plan are appropriate. However, not all the targets are clear enough for senior leaders to be able to judge how well they have been met or for governors to hold the leaders to account.
- Leaders ensure the school runs smoothly and that the warm welcoming atmosphere is maintained. The leadership team has been reorganised recently as a result of key staff leaving. There has been a greater involvement of subject leaders who have been given training and responded well to their increased responsibilities. They have been closely involved in assessing the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in their subjects.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its assemblies and its broad curriculum that includes a good focus on creative subjects such as music. Pupils develop a good understanding of the core values encapsulated in the school's acronym 'SHARE.' Pupils are provided with good opportunities for learning outside the classroom through trips, for example, to the National Gallery, and a good range of clubs.
- Sport has a high profile in the school and the primary school sport funding is used effectively to extend the range of activities available and teachers' expertise in sports coaching, so that pupils enjoyment of and participation in sport is increased. Boys and girls in Year 5 showed great enjoyment and good skill in a PE lesson in devising and performing a sequence of gymnastic movements.
- The school has worked hard and successfully to improve its relationships with parents, including

some innovative approaches to encourage further involvement of fathers and classes for parents to help their children at home. Parents express great appreciation for the work of the school and the approachability of staff.

- To support working parents, the school runs a breakfast bar before the start of the day and an after-school club, which provides a safe and secure place with games and activities that are enjoyable and support pupils' learning well.
- The school meets all requirements relating to the safeguarding of its pupils. It promotes equality of opportunity effectively and makes use of pupil premium funding to enhance opportunities for eligible pupils, for example, through the employment of a teacher to support eligible pupils who may be slipping behind.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good range of relevant skills and experience, such as in finance and health and safety, but is less secure in understanding how well pupils are doing compared to the national picture. Governors are regularly informed about the school's work through reports from the head teacher and their own regular focused visits. They provide strong support to the school, but do not challenge the school enough about the impact of initiatives on the progress of pupils.
- Governors are involved in setting challenging targets for the headteacher and ensuring the school's funds are spent prudently. Although closely involved in such decisions, governors do not take enough account of pupils' achievement when awarding pay increases and in allocating the pupil premium. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding 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

Unique reference number	115282
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	443838

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miggie Hillson
Headteacher	Neil Woollcott
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2011
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