

Leverstock Green Church of England Primary School

Green Lane, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 4SA

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Attainment and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved and are above national levels.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and ensures that children make at least good progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan tasks which match the needs of all pupils. Moreover, their good subject knowledge enables them to ask effective questions.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The pupils like school and feel safe and appreciate all that it has to offer.
- The headteacher leads with dedication and has correctly identified the strengths and limitations of the school. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and a developing senior leadership team. All leaders are determined to improve teaching and achievement.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school and regularly check and challenge leaders on pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. They are fully committed to the school and monitor finance and safety effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length and the accuracy and presentation of their work is not as good as it could be.
- Subject leaders do not have a significant impact on improving teaching and the achievement that pupils make.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited parts of 17 lessons, including three observations shared with the headteacher.
- Work in pupils’ books was analysed and inspectors talked to pupils about their work. The inspectors listened to pupils read, visited an assembly and observed play and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, two members of the governing body, senior members of staff, and pupils. A telephone call was made to a representative of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the school’s self-evaluation summary, information on pupils’ current progress, documents related to safeguarding, school leadership and the curriculum.
- Parents’ views were taken into account through the 38 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) and through meeting parents before school.
- The inspection team took into account the questionnaires completed by 30 staff.

Inspection team

David Berry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gillian Walley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Leverstock Green is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school. The drop in pupil numbers is due to some parents moving out from the local area.
- Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority) is currently below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and improve pupils' learning and progress by:
 - improving the quantity of extended written work
 - raising expectations of how children record and present their work.
- Develop the impact of subject leaders by making sure the responsibility for improving teaching is spread more widely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good and some make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children begin Nursery or Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding broadly typical for their age. The children show excellent attitudes to learning and enjoy the exciting challenges planned for them.
- Some children make outstanding progress because teachers have high expectations and provide children with activities that are interesting and stimulating. An example of this was an activity planned in Reception where children had to write a question in preparation for a visit from the parish priest.
- Historically, pupils' attainment has been above the national average in Key Stages 1 and 2. Last year, these levels of attainment dropped. However, the school has taken robust action to address this dip and attainment is now above national levels at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Rigorous checks of pupils' books and discussions with pupils indicates that attainment levels are above national levels this year. Pupils are determined to do well and are keen to learn. In many lessons observed, it was clear that they enjoy the opportunities and challenges expected of them to solve problems. Although there was some variation across the school, most pupils when questioned were clear about what they needed to do to improve their learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Through rigorous analysis of pupil progress and appropriate targeted support, pupils are now making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2013, the attainment gap between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils in Year 2 was ten months. At the end of Key Stage 2 the attainment gap was just two months. The 2013 gap was accounted for by more of the pupils having special educational needs. Current data indicate that eligible pupils are making as much progress as the others and gaps in attainment are closing throughout the school. In fact, in some year groups, pupils supported by the pupil premium are doing better than their classmates.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check was well below the national average and in contrast to 2012 where it was above. Senior leaders have made sure that this has been addressed and it is on course to be above last year's national level.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in their learning and they make good progress. Through accurate use of progress data, staff make sure that these pupils receive all the support they need.
- The school has improved provision for the most-able pupils. By checking how well pupils are doing in lessons and over time, the school provides additional booster classes in mathematics and writing. This year a number of pupils are working at Level 6 at the end of Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good and some of it, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons matching pupils' needs. Equally, they demand and expect much from their pupils. An example of this was seen in a Year 5 English lesson that required pupils to write a script. The teacher showed good knowledge of the subject and skilfully intervened and challenged pupils in order to extend their thinking.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure which enables them to give pupils clear explanations. An example of this was seen in Year 1 where pupils had to review a series of photographs from a recent visit to the seaside and compare them to the images from the past. All pupils were engaged and enjoyed the discussion comparing similarities and differences between the sets of photographs.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies and resources to inspire and engage pupils during lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils had to explore a moral question through their understanding of Buddhism. They responded enthusiastically to the challenge of finding appropriate ways of presenting their ideas.
- All classrooms are positive places as a result of strong and harmonious relationships between adults and pupils. In a number of lessons observed, pupils worked in a variety of ways and at all times they were encouraged to talk about their learning and how they could improve their work.
- In the best marked books seen, teachers gave useful advice to pupils on how to improve their work. In a number of books, pupils acted upon the advice, resulting in them making good progress.
- There are inconsistencies in the actual amount of writing that is produced across the school by pupils. In some classes, pupils do not write at length. The presentation and accuracy of their work varies. It is not always good enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils talk positively about their experiences at the school and believe that all teaching staff are keen for them to learn. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary and around the school they are polite and well-mannered. Pupils are confident and eager to talk about what they learn in school.
- Pupils approach tasks enthusiastically. Many are proud of their achievements although this is not often reflected in the presentation or organisation of their learning in their books. Nevertheless, it is clear that most pupils make good progress. When it is expected, pupils take great pride in their work.
- Pupils are friendly, helpful and polite to both adults and each other. Older pupils are given a range of responsibilities that include the 'Change Team' and 'R.E. Ambassadors'. These groups play an important part in the life of the school and talk proudly of the contribution they make such as raising funds, selling cakes or supporting the annual school fete.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Access to the school is well controlled and all statutory checks of staff appointments are done prior to appointment. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and the school has fostered good links with outside agencies.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and their parents agree that they are kept safe. The school offers many opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe, including road safety, bike safety and from other potential hazards. Pupils were also able to talk about clear guidance and rules that they must follow when accessing the internet and how to stay safe when online.
- Pupils have a good understanding of all types of bullying and say that it does not usually occur but if it does then it is dealt with immediately. Older pupils take care of younger pupils and they believe that playtimes are enjoyable period.
- The school seeks to promote equality. Pupils from diverse backgrounds get on well with each other and the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. This message was observed during an assembly that explored the themes of 'love' and 'giving'. The school is proud of being a 'Rights Respecting School' with all classrooms following a code of conduct that emphasises mutual tolerance and respect of each other.
- Attendance is above average and demonstrates that most pupils are happy in school and believe that they make an important contribution to it. The school closely monitors both attendance and punctuality and regularly communicates the importance of regular attendance through a weekly newsletter.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been effective in improving the school and in providing higher standards for its pupils. She has been well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they have been effective in driving improvement. They have accurately identified the right priorities for the school to improve even further.
- Revised systems of checking pupils' attainment and progress are being used effectively. Leaders use this information about pupils very well and are now tackling any areas of underachievement at an early stage, ensuring that all groups achieve well.
- The headteacher has correctly identified the need to develop subject leaders and they are now actively involved in checking pupils' performance and are supporting the senior leaders well. Nevertheless, they need to extend their knowledge in the use of information about pupils' progress in order to challenge and support other members of staff.
- Senior leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and are able to show how teaching has improved over the past two years. When weaker teaching is identified, leaders have been quick in their response and have provided effective support so that teaching is now typically good. This work has not yet led to consistently high quality teaching resulting in pupils making rapid progress.
- Subjects are taught through topics that are interesting and enjoyable. These support a clear programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school widely engages in fund-raising events, assemblies that promote quiet reflection and prayer and sporting tournaments. It promotes good links with other schools and provides opportunities to explore what it means to live in modern Britain.
- The primary sport funding has been used to employ a 'sports apprentice' who is helping to assist in the teaching of physical education and in the running of additional clubs. Funding has also been allocated to the training of teachers in physical education. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the physical education lessons now and the increase in clubs. This has a positive impact on their physical well-being.

- The local authority has provided appropriate support that is now light touch.
- Safeguarding procedures and practices meet requirements and are effective in keeping pupils safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and are able to identify the strengths and areas for improvement accurately. They have been fully involved in devising the school improvement plan and the school’s self-evaluation. The governing body’s minutes show that meetings are used effectively to challenge the school’s leadership. The governors ensure that teachers’ salary progression is linked directly to pupils’ performance and know about the quality of teaching. They carefully monitor the use of the pupil premium and make sure that all pupils are given the opportunities to succeed in school. The governors with responsibilities for key subjects such as English, mathematics and safeguarding regularly visit the school to find out first-hand how it is getting on. They know about pupils’ performance and the quality of teaching. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher.

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	117416
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	439955

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Rayner
Headteacher	Victoria Burgess
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
Telephone number	01442 406520
Fax number	01442 406522
Email address	admin@leverstockgreen.herts.sch.uk

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