

Laira Green Primary School

Bramley Road, Laira, Plymouth, PL3 6BP

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Leaders have not sufficiently addressed inconsistencies in pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 to ensure the achievement of all groups of pupils is good over time.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding effectively enough to move them on to appropriately challenging work swiftly. Consequently, some of the most able pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is hindered because there are not enough occasions for them to write at length across areas of learning.
- Teachers do not ensure pupils are able to understand fully what they have read when reading more challenging texts.
- The approach to marking pupils' work varies too much. As a result, not all pupils are able to benefit from feedback that helps them to improve their work.
- Leaders are not rigorous enough in their analysis of the progress and attainment of pupils to give them a clear picture of how well the school is performing compared to other schools nationally.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of the achievement of pupils in order to hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong leadership within the early years has resulted in securing children's good progress.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above average.
- The school has been successful in significantly narrowing the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and those nationally.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is good and is supporting pupils' early reading skills very well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they fully engage in their learning, eager to do well. The work of the school to ensure pupils are safe is good. Pupils' attendance has increased and safeguarding procedures are extremely robust.
- Pupils with additional needs are supported very well in this inclusive school. A strong emphasis on supporting their personal development needs enables pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of learning opportunities. The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 23 lessons, two of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading, looked at pupils' work in their books and spoke to others about their work and other aspects of school. An inspector observed pupils at playtime.
- They held meetings with the headteacher and members of staff. They discussed pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and the progress of those pupils who have special educational needs.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation including records of the quality of teaching, the school's information on pupils' progress, the sports funding action plan, the school improvement plan and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- A meeting was held with five governors, including the Chair. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with an officer from the local authority.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration, including the 19 who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. A letter from a parent was also received. An inspector also spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. Staff views were considered in the 33 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Anne Wesley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Laura Green is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend full time and are taught in two Reception classes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught in four separate year classes. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in five mixed-year classes, each with pupils from two year groups.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. There are increasing numbers of pupils attending the school who are from various minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing but is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than would normally be expected is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of those who are supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational need is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is approximately twice the national average. This additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- 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 Pre-School (Green Shoots) is located within the school grounds. It is not managed by the governors and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is typically good or better by ensuring that teachers:
 - improve their questioning skills in order to check pupils' understanding and adapt their learning activities more quickly
 - adopt a consistent approach when marking pupils work so that all pupils are able to benefit from effective feedback in order to improve.
- Raise achievement in Key Stage 2, especially for the more able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that, when pupils read challenging texts, they are able to comprehend and interpret the messages contained within the text
 - developing pupils' writing skills by providing them with more occasions to practise writing at greater length across the range of areas of learning
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solve real-life problems.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders, at all levels, use rigorous systems to gather and accurately analyse the achievement of pupils and the performance of the school
 - governors have a clear understanding of the achievement of pupils and how they compare to pupils nationally so that they can hold leaders fully to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time not enough has been done to secure consistently good achievement and teaching in Key Stage 2.
- The systems senior leaders use to analyse the achievement of pupils have not been robust enough. This has led to their self-evaluation of the school's performance being overgenerous. Necessary actions have not been taken to improve teaching in order to address these weaknesses. As a result, achievement for some pupils is still not good enough.
- Subject leaders undertake checks to judge how effective teaching is in their area of responsibility, for example by scrutinising pupils' work. However, along with those of senior leaders, these checks are not rigorous enough to ensure pupils' good achievement.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have a shared vision for the school and are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve well. Supported by governors, the headteacher has successfully challenged weaker teaching at the school and has made some significant improvements, most notably in teaching in the early years and at Key Stage 1, demonstrating the school's capacity to sustain further improvements.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to improve their practice in order to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers are reflective of their own teaching and regularly undertake training. They understand the need for good teaching in order to secure pupils' good achievement. Teachers' performance is regularly checked and is linked to pupils' achievement. However, this has not been robust enough to ensure consistently good teaching, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Provision enables disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to have the same opportunities to be successful as their peers. Leadership of this area of the school is good and the wide range of additional support activities is especially effective at helping pupils develop socially and emotionally. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by teaching assistants. The staff ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all school activities and will not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- The school effectively enables pupils to develop their physical well-being. The additional primary funding for sport is providing pupils with a greater range of sporting activities and clubs, such as tennis and tap dancing. School staff are developing their skills well to provide physical education. Pupils say they enjoy the sports activities at the school and being in the school teams.
- The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been effectively used. The school is successfully closing the gap between these pupils and other pupils at the school, and nationally.
- Subjects and topics covered by the school are broad and balanced. They are enriched, for example, by the inclusion for all pupils of regular forest school sessions and work on the school allotment. The school's links with schools in France and Nepal help pupils to understand the differences between different cultures and supports the school's work to promote an understanding of British values. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps foster their caring attitudes towards each other.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current statutory requirements and are robustly managed. A recent audit, conducted by the local authority at the request of the school, confirms inspection findings.
- The local authority has kept the performance of the school under review and has supported leaders and governors through regular consultant visits and moderation of pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and want it to do well. Governors have had some training from the local authority, but are not always confident about their own analysis of information showing how well the school is performing. They are regularly informed about pupils' progress and teachers work through detailed reports from the headteacher. However, they do not have sufficiently rigorous systems in place to check the accuracy of the reports and the impact on school self-evaluation.
 - Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and visit it regularly. Regular meetings are scheduled with the Chair person and headteacher to discuss the school development plans. They have successfully supported the headteacher in eliminating inadequate teaching. Governors are involved in making decisions about teachers' pay and in ensuring that teachers' pay is aligned to their performance.
 - Governors have a good grasp of the budget and monitor this carefully along with the additional funding the school receives. Governors ensure statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are fully in place.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are generally attentive and listen to their teachers, wanting to do well. They are happy to concentrate on, and remain absorbed in, their work. Their positive attitudes to learning have a good impact on their progress. However, sometimes a few pupils lose concentration in class when the work is not suitably challenging and do not make the progress they should.
- Pupils are welcoming and talk confidently to visitors to their school. The atmosphere is calm around the school and pupils of all ages play together well. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and know how to behave in different situations.
- Pupils' good conduct reflects the school's high expectations of their behaviour. The school's records show very few incidents of poor behaviour since the previous inspection. Pupils told inspectors that learning is rarely interrupted and that behaviour is good. Almost all parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils take on responsibilities and help in the school's daily routines. Pupils are keen to be a school council member and all pupils are involved in voting. Older pupils who have whole school responsibilities, such as house captains, undertake the role with pride. Pupils are smartly dressed in school uniform and are well prepared to start work in lessons. This reflects pupils' strong attitudes towards their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that bullying is rare. This is confirmed by school records. Pupils understand about the different types of bullying, including cyber and prejudice-based bullying. Pupils were especially knowledgeable about keeping safe when using the internet and were able to explain what actions they need to take if they feel unsafe.
- Pupils know how to move around the school safely. They look after each other and play safely together outside. Pupils are confident that the school is a safe place to be. They know that the adults look after them well and will sort out any problems they may have quickly.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is now similar to the national average for primary schools. This improvement has been secured following effective action taken by school leaders to improve attendance. The school rigorously follows up absence. Consequently, there are now fewer pupils at the school with persistently high levels of absence. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because in the recent past it has not resulted in consistently good achievement in Key Stage 2. Therefore, as pupils move through the school, not enough of them have made good progress from their individual starting points.
- The more able pupils are not always effectively challenged. Teachers do not always use good quality questions to check pupils' understanding effectively enough. Consequently, they are not always moved on quickly to more challenging tasks so they can make the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not always plan work in literacy to encourage pupils to practise their writing at length. Similarly in mathematics too much work in books shows pupils completing lists of sums without enough opportunities to apply these mathematical skills to problem solving. This is limiting some pupils, especially the more able, from attaining higher standards.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers indicate clearly where pupils have made mistakes and celebrate success. However, there is a lack of a consistent approach so that the quality of the feedback pupils receive is variable. Some teachers provide useful comments for pupils that can assist them to improve their work but are not always responded to by pupils. Pupils understand their personal learning goals in literacy and numeracy and know what they have to do in order to achieve them. Teachers encourage pupils to check these goals when work is undertaken in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching has improved in Key Stage 1 and the Reception Year since the previous inspection. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics session, highly effective questioning required pupils to reflect on their learning in ways that deepened their understanding. As a result, their progress was strong throughout the session.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. Well above the national average proportions of pupils passed the phonics check in Year 1, supporting their early reading skills. However, as they become more proficient in reading, some pupils, especially the more able, are not always able to interpret the messages contained in more challenging texts.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support. This is especially so when working with smaller groups of

pupils and those with additional needs. Here they skilfully guide them to become increasingly confident, for example in using their literacy skills.

- Despite some weakness in teaching, almost all parents felt that their children's learning is effective. Pupils value their teachers and say that they enjoy learning at the school.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stage 2. While the school has secured improvements in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, not enough pupils are making better progress than they would normally be expected to make by the time they leave the school in Year 6. Consequently, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was below average in 2014. Reading was well below average. However, this was reflective of the impact of a small but significant group of pupils whose lower standards attained in the test adversely affected the results of all abilities. Attainment in reading in all other year groups is similar to writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils do not always achieve well enough. The proportion achieving the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the national figures in 2014, reflecting their progress that required improvement from their starting points in Year 3.
- A scrutiny of current pupils' work indicates that progress is improving in reading, writing and mathematics. Improved teaching, secured in Key Stage 1, has led to the significant improvement in attainment in the Year 2 assessments in 2013 and improved further in 2014.
- The school is successfully closing the attainment gap for pupils who are eligible for additional funding. In the Year 6 tests in 2014, the gap in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics closed from approximately 18 months in 2012 to a term behind. In mathematics and writing it reduced similarly compared with other pupils nationally. However, although the gap seemed to widen slightly in reading compared with other pupils nationally in 2014, this was reflective of the lower attainment of all pupils in the subject. Information collected during the inspection indicates that pupils eligible for additional funding are making at least similar progress, and often better, when compared to others in all year groups and all gaps are closing rapidly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive. Effective additional activities ensure that these pupils are enabled to make at least the progress they are expected to make. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress. Pupils who join the school at times other than those normally expected are welcomed and supported well. This means they settle quickly, making rapid progress in the development of their language.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved significantly and are above the national figures. The school has ensured that pupils learn their phonic sounds systematically and is supporting their progress in reading. Guided reading sessions are a regular feature of the school and pupils report they enjoy reading.

The early years provision

is good

- The quality of teaching in the early years is good.
- Children enter the school in the Reception Year with mixed levels of skills, often below what might be expected in aspects of communication, numeracy and understanding of the world. They make good progress because adults provide a rich array of experiences which are closely matched to their needs to reach the good level of development expected for their stage at the end of Reception.
- As a result, all children, including those who are most able, those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, enjoy their learning and are eager and confident to tackle new tasks. The teaching is also helping to prepare them well for moving into Key Stage 1. The school is closing the attainment gap between children eligible for additional funding and their peers, with an increasing proportion of eligible children attaining a good level of development.
- Children settle very quickly into the routines of daily education in the Reception classes because of the good transition arrangements with the privately operated pre-school on site. Staff liaise well and relationships are formed with parents and children before they arrive. Staff are welcoming and give good levels of care and attention to each and every child. Parents are encouraged to work with the staff to improve their children's development. Assessments increasingly involve parents in recording the progress of their children.

- A good ratio of adults to children means that group sizes are kept small. Staff have the time to show children how to improve their skills. For example, children are shown how to count using a variety of resources to embed their understanding. Children are keen and enjoy making their own choice of activities and learn from having a go themselves. Staff set up a wide range of interesting activities to capture their imagination. Children were in awe of the prospect of designing and making their own rocket with plastic bottles that could be fired using air from a bicycle pump. All children get on very well together and play together safely. Behaviour is good and safeguarding requirements are met.
- Leadership and management of the early years are highly effective. Class teachers plan together well and all staff are particularly good at checking each child's progress.

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	113278
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	442507

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	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Pratt
Headteacher	Daisy Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 November 2012
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