

# Lessness Heath Primary School

Erith Road, Belvedere, Kent, DA17 6HB

## Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders at all levels have not done enough to stop the decline in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The governing body has not carried out its role and responsibilities effectively. Governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the school's performance.
- Middle leaders are at the early stages of developing their roles and therefore do not contribute sufficiently to making rapid improvements in their areas. It is too soon to measure their contribution to driving improvements.
- Too many pupils make inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly across Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is not good enough to bring about the necessary acceleration in pupils' achievement. Checks on the quality of teaching have not been rigorous until recently.
- Behaviour requires improvement. Pupils are not engaged in their learning where teaching is weak.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not good enough. Pupils do not develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills quickly and securely.
- The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are too wide. Boys, in particular, as well as the most able pupils, do not achieve as well they should.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Boys' achievement and children's literacy skills are not good enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are beginning to make the necessary improvements needed in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language usually achieve well and often do better than other pupils nationally.
- The school is effective in keeping pupils safe in school. Pupils say they feel safe.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are now making better progress because of the better support they receive.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons. Five of these sessions were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed two assemblies in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work across the school and listened to pupils reading in each of the year groups.
- The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunch times and looked at the way pupils conducted themselves around the school.
- Meetings were held with key staff, two members of the governing body, three groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including governing body minutes, the school's evaluation of its own performance, procedures for checking the quality of teaching, and information about pupils' attainment and progress. They also considered records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 32 responses from the online questionnaire Parent View. They spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took into consideration the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional Inspector
Anna Boshier	Additional Inspector
John Viner	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The early years provision is comprised of a part-time morning and afternoon Nursery, and three Reception classes where children attend on a full-time basis.
- There have been many changes to the senior and middle leadership since the last inspection. The acting headteacher left at the end of December 2013. The current headteacher started in January 2014.
- The governing body is going through a turbulent time. It has lost several of its experienced members. The Chair and Vice Chair have resigned, leaving only an Acting Chair.
- There have been significant changes in the teaching staff. Ten newly qualified teachers and three more experienced teachers were appointed in September 2014.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportions of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are above average. The main languages spoken in the school besides English are Yoruba, Punjabi and Turkish.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
  - gaps in teachers' subject knowledge are addressed, particularly in mathematics
  - pupils present their work to a high standard
  - pupils in Key Stage 2, and boys in particular, develop a secure knowledge of reading, writing and mathematical skills
  - children in the early years provision develop their literacy skills rapidly and boys achieve well
  - the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others closes quickly
  - planned activities help all pupils to concentrate on their work and behave consistently well
  - work is always challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils
  - teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work in all subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that all middle leaders make a strong contribution to improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement in their areas of responsibility
  - improving governors' understanding of pupil performance data
  - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

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

An external review of the school's 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 leadership and management

### are inadequate

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not ensured that good standards have been maintained in teaching. The quality of teaching has significantly declined since the previous inspection, and too many pupils have made inadequate progress. As a result, many pupils have not achieved their potential. Although they have started to make some improvements, the current senior leadership team has not been in post long enough to stop the decline. Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively in order to close the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the school and all pupils nationally.
- Leaders have failed to address the underperformance of boys and the most able pupils throughout the school. They have not ensured that all groups of pupils have an equal chance of being successful.
- The local authority voiced concerns about the school's performance to the governing body 18 months ago. The local authority subsequently increased its support, but was unsuccessful in halting the decline in pupils' achievement.
- In almost one third of the responses from the online questionnaire, parents stated that they would not recommend the school to another parent. A few responses noted overall dissatisfaction with the school.
- Sport premium funding is not used effectively to help all pupils develop healthy lifestyles and reach the performance levels of which they are capable. The funding is used to fund coaches and training for staff. The impact of the funding is not checked by school leaders.
- The curriculum has not met the different needs of all groups of pupils and has been too narrow. It has not enabled pupils to make good progress in their academic and personal development. The curriculum has not been sufficiently focused on raising achievement in writing and mathematics in particular. However, it is preparing pupils for life in modern Britain through exploration of a variety of cultures and is developing their understanding about democracy and human rights.
- Since her appointment, the current headteacher has started to take the action needed to ensure that improvements are being made quickly in the school. Together with senior leaders, she has started to address some of the weaknesses in teaching. Procedures for managing staff performance have been reviewed and have improved.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles and so are not yet sufficiently involved in improving teaching and raising achievement in their areas. They have not been in post long enough to demonstrate an impact on securing improvements.
- The inspection team judges that the school should not appoint any newly qualified teachers at this stage.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown through relevant displays that show a range of art work and promote the school's values of achievement, respect and responsibility. Assemblies provide quality reflection time. For example, during the inspection, pupils thought deeply about 'what makes a good friend'.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and is effective in keeping pupils safe. Policies and procedures are well known and implemented by all staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors do not hold school leaders to account for the school's performance. They are over reliant on the information given to them by the school. Some governors have recently had training on how to understand the school's data. This helped to raise their awareness, and gave rise to serious concerns about the school. The governors have limited knowledge about the quality of teaching throughout the school. The performance management of the headteacher is in place. However, governors are not aware of how the school tackles any underperformance or how it rewards good teaching. Governors do not have a clear understanding of how the sport and pupil premium funding are spent. They do not know what impact the funding is having on pupils' development.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils say that their learning is sometimes interrupted by pupils calling out and talking in lessons. Pupils are generally willing and ready to learn at the start of lessons. They tend to switch off and become less interested in their learning where teaching is weak.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school; they are polite and friendly. They play and work well with each other. They show respect and care towards one another and to the school environment. They

adhere to the school uniform policy. The majority of staff and parents are of the view that pupils behave well in the school, but inspectors found that behaviour in classrooms requires improvement.

- Pupils are keen to take responsibility, for example, as school council representatives and library assistants. Applications are invited from pupils to fill these posts. Pupils are keen to apply for them. Once appointed, they take their roles seriously.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the different types of bullying. They say that when any bullying does occur, the school always deals with it quickly.
- School leaders have acted successfully to improve pupils' previously low attendance. The school is working well with other agencies to support the few pupils that do not attend regularly, and is also focusing on improving punctuality. Attendance is now broadly average.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Improvements to the school site, such as more secure fencing, have helped to tighten up the security around the school. Pupils say this helps them to feel safe.
- Pupils say that they feel valued and that, if they need support in any way, they know who they can go to for help.
- Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Visitors are suitably checked before they are allowed to enter into the building.
- The majority of parents and staff are confident that pupils are kept safe in school; inspectors agree.

### The quality of teaching

#### is inadequate

- The quality of teaching has declined over time. Improvements have not been sustained or effective enough. Consequently, teaching is inadequate, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Mathematics is not taught effectively because some teachers' subject knowledge is not good enough. As a result, pupils do not have a secure understanding of some of the basic concepts in this subject, for example in area and perimeter.
- Some activities do not extend and challenge pupils' thinking or sustain their interest. This is particularly true of the most able pupils. Too often, the work given is not difficult enough and this limits the progress they make.
- Work in pupils' books shows that the quality of teachers' marking varies too much between classes and subjects. Some teachers do not give clear enough guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work, particularly in their topic books.
- Typically, writing is not taught well enough. There are a few instances where this is improving. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote interesting and lively letters about the First World War.
- Pupils' presentation of their work is frequently not good enough because teachers do not insist that pupils present their work to a high standard. Teachers do not always expect pupils to follow the school's agreed approach to setting their work out neatly. School leaders have provided extra training for staff on teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) to pupils at the early stages of reading. As a result, this is helping pupils to build their confidence in tackling unfamiliar words.
- Very recently, teaching assistants provided more focused extra 'catch up and challenge' support to individuals who need it. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this work.

### The achievement of pupils

#### is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is inadequate. As a result of inadequate teaching, pupils' performance declined in 2014. Over time, attainment has been broadly average in these subjects by the end of Key Stage 1. However, pupils consistently fail to make enough progress in Key Stage 2, so that attainment is below average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Consequently, pupils are not fully prepared to continue with confidence into secondary education.
- The gap between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and others nationally has widened in reading and mathematics over the last three years and is too wide. The results from the 2014 national tests show that, in reading, these pupils are almost a year behind the others in the school and almost four terms behind all pupils nationally. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils are just over four terms behind the others in the school and just over five terms behind all pupils nationally. In writing, they are just over two terms behind compared to others in the school and others nationally. The gaps are similarly wide between these groups of pupils in all year groups throughout the

school.

- Boys at the school do not achieve as well as girls or boys nationally. Boys make less progress in comparison with girls in all year groups. The gap between boys and girls is very wide by the time they move up to Year 1 and it continues to widen in all year groups.
- The most able pupils do not achieve well because the work is often too easy for them. This is why they attain significantly below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards of attainment for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are below their peers nationally in mathematics and reading. They did better than their peers in writing in the 2014 national tests. In the past, these pupils made similar inadequate progress to the others in the school. Since the beginning of the current academic year, these pupils are beginning to make better progress. This is because leaders are closely monitoring and measuring the impact of provision, and ensuring that the support given is more effective.
- Results from the national phonic screening check for Year 1 show improvement over the last three years. School leaders have provided good-quality extra training for staff and are working with parents to help them to support their children with reading. Pupils in the early stages of reading are becoming more confident in tackling unfamiliar words. Others at a more advanced stage enjoy talking about their books. Pupils' achievement in reading in Key Stage 2 does not show similar improvement.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often achieve better than their peers, all pupils nationally and other pupils in the school by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. They benefit from effective support from the time that they join the school.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- This year, children entered Nursery with skills and understanding that are below those typical for their age. Two thirds of children join Reception from other settings and start with skills below those typical for their age. Children make quicker progress in the early years provision than pupils in the rest of the school as a result of better teaching.
- Most children acquire the skills they need to be ready to move to Year 1 by the end of Reception. However, there is a marked gap in achievement between boys and girls by the time they leave the early years provision. The school is addressing this through catering for the needs of the boys through improvements to the curriculum. Overall, children tend to be weaker in literacy than in all other subjects.
- Children gain particular strengths in physical development and personal, social and emotional development. This is helped by the good range of activities provided in the outdoor areas and their involvement in Forest School.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it is not yet strong enough to enable children's good and better progress.
- The outdoor areas are thoroughly used by all children. In the Nursery, children actively engage in imaginative play, for example by making cupcakes in the muddy 'building site'. Boys and girls enjoyed pretending to be fire fighters, wearing helmets and holding the fire hoses. The quality of the indoor provision varies between Nursery and Reception. Children's speaking and listening skills are not always well developed in the Nursery.
- Children are happy, confident and safely play together. They behave well and feel safe. They are proud of their 'value points'. One child explained to an inspector, 'I get them when I am good.' Children in the Reception classes enjoy talking about, and looking at, their work. They are particularly proud of the display showing how much they have changed from the time they were a baby.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are improving because staff are making better use of data to inform their planning, and closer checks are made on the quality of teaching.
- Links with parents and outside providers are a strength. Effective transition arrangements are in place to help children settle quickly on entry to Nursery and Reception, and when they move into Year 1.

## 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>	101424
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	444101

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	660
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Murray Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miranda Hornett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 433290
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