

Linden Primary School

Linden Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL1 5HU

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher is an exceptionally effective leader. Together with the deputy headteacher and other leaders, she has driven improvement with determination and vigour since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve very well from their low starting points. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they reach standards above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers' marking and feedback, especially in English and mathematics, give precise guidance for pupils on how to improve their work.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress. Teachers plan interesting indoor activities to develop children's personal and social skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is impressive. The school's high expectation of excellent manners and conduct ensures there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in all classes.
- The rich curriculum gives pupils memorable learning experiences and opportunities to broaden their cultural development.
- The governing body is well informed about teaching and achievement throughout the school. The governors use their collective skills effectively to challenge senior and middle leaders.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now broadly average. Robust procedures have reduced persistent absence.
- Excellent pastoral care underpins pupils' sense of feeling safe and supported. Relationships between adults and pupils are highly positive.
- Parents appreciate the additional care and guidance given to pupils who need extra help. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers share the same high expectations of the standard of work in pupils' books, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Outdoor activities in the Reception class do not sufficiently develop children's independence and decision making skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and one hymn practice. They observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, five which were jointly observed by school leaders.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and nine members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school’s information on pupils’ attainment and progress, school improvement plans, work in pupils’ books, safeguarding documents and information relating to the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of 24 parents and carers who responded to Parent View were analysed. The inspectors took into consideration discussions with a small group of parents and the views of 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during their lessons and at break times. In addition, they listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Simon Mower

Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- Early years provision in the Reception class is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club is provided by the school.
- The headteacher and other school leaders provide informal support to other schools in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the consistency of teaching and achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics, by ensuring all teachers have equally high expectations of the standard of pupils' work.
- Improve the outdoor learning provision in the Reception classes, so children have regular opportunities to develop their independence and decision making skills through purposeful activities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has developed a united team of leaders who are all highly ambitious for the school. Together with a highly focused governing body, they share a strong and determined desire to provide the best personal and academic education for the pupils. Since the last inspection, the quality of marking and assessment has greatly improved and is embedded well in English and mathematics. This has had a positive impact on rising standards.
- Middle leaders have an acutely accurate understanding of the school's performance and a strong grasp of their roles. They regularly check teachers' adherence to the marking policy, observe the quality of learning and initiate improvements in their areas of responsibility. For example, the English and mathematics leaders have successfully introduced programmes which have increased pupils' motivation to write and recall number facts. Consequently, their highly effective leadership continues to improve standards in writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is rooted in a belief that pupils learn best from real and relevant experiences. Visits to local areas of interest, such as Broadway Tower and Gloucester Cathedral, strengthen pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Pupils told an inspector that trips and visits 'help us learn interesting facts about topics and help us improve our writing'.
- Leaders make highly effective use of the school's diverse cultural and social mix to develop pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain. Discrimination is not tolerated and pupils celebrate each other's unique characteristics. A pupil told an inspector, 'Everyone is treated the same, we are one big family and no one would dare to treat others differently.' Many pupils share this view.
- Assembly themes and classroom topics contribute strongly to pupils' understanding of British values. For example, pupils learn about 'choices and consequences', which encourage them to behave well and accept responsibility for their actions. Other values, including democracy, acceptance and tolerance, form part of a comprehensive citizenship programme. This reflects the school's commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Primary sport funding is comprehensively planned to increase participation rates and develop healthy lifestyles. Competitive sport is promoted through a range of activities, including football, netball, cross-country, dance and gymnastics. The deployment of external coaches is improving staff expertise and their knowledge of the sports and physical education curriculum. Funding has improved pupils' knowledge of healthy eating through a health and nutrition programme. Pupils told the inspector, 'PE helps us improve our fitness and aim to be the best.'
- Communication with parents is strong. Parents spoken to during the inspection were positive about the approachability of school staff and the 'extra mile everyone goes' to support pupils' well-being. Most responses to Parent View agreed that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding very well to support the large number of disadvantaged pupils. At the end of Year 6, gaps in the attainment of eligible pupils and others have closed in reading and are closing rapidly in writing and mathematics.
- The local authority works closely with the school to support improvements, such as the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The headteacher and other school leaders are held in high esteem by the local authority and help support local schools to improve their practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. The effectiveness of governance is strengthened by members' wide variety of skills and experience, which enable them to ask appropriate questions and challenge the school's work. Governors visit the school frequently to check the accuracy of the school's actions and verify data on pupils' progress. They make excellent use of the information they receive from senior and middle leaders, which helps them hold leaders to account.
 - Governors undertake regular training to make sure their knowledge and expertise are up to date. For example, some governors have completed safer recruitment training to fulfil their statutory safeguarding responsibilities when interviewing staff. Governors check the robustness of the school's safeguarding procedures which keep pupils safe and secure.

- The school's finances are well managed and aligned to school priorities. For example, the school's investment of an additional Year 6 teacher has targeted the most-able mathematicians to reach the highest possible levels of attainment. Governors are 'impact driven' and expect pupils to succeed academically as a result of the governors' management of resources.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and how the management of teachers' performance has been used to improve teaching. They ensure that pay increases are linked to pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. During a tour of the school, pupils were welcoming and courteous to the inspection team. Older pupils told an inspector, 'We are taught right from Reception to be polite and respectful at all times.'
- Throughout the school, highly positive relationships exist between pupils and staff. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their willingness to support and help each other enhance lessons. Pupils are keen to work hard and persevere when they find work difficult. These attributes make a significant contribution to their good achievement.
- Teachers consistently apply the school's effective systems to manage pupils' behaviour. The few pupils with poor behaviour are managed and supported exceptionally well, so that other pupils' learning is not disrupted.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour in lessons extends to break and lunch times. Pupils play well together because of the quality and variety of activities to keep them occupied. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities such as play leaders, school councillors or monitors. This responsibility motivates them to achieve well.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. Pupils are very well informed about different types of bullying, including physical and verbal. They have complete confidence and trust in school adults to deal with any problems that arise. Records of behavioural incidents confirm that misbehaviour is rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Staff are knowledgeable and well trained in recognising and reporting signs of risk or harm. A dedicated pastoral team makes a significant contribution to pupils and families who need extra help and advice. A parent told an inspector, 'Nothing is too much trouble for the staff and the support they provide is invaluable.'
- Pupils are well informed of the risks associated with social media and the internet. For example, pupils enthusiastically told an inspector about the importance of privacy settings and how to stay safe online. Pupils have good mechanisms for reporting any concerns.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and persistent absence is low. Measures to improve attendance and punctuality, such as a well-organised breakfast club, rewards and certificates, are making a positive difference to pupils' attendance.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire expressed confidence in the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff know individual pupils well and plan creative and exciting work which is based on accurate assessments of their abilities. Teachers encourage pupils to set their own challenges and waste no time moving pupils on to harder work.
- School records indicate that teaching over time in most subjects is typically good, and some is outstanding. Where it is at its best, purposeful and precise teaching gives pupils the confidence to tackle challenging activities. For example, in a phonics (the sounds letters make) lesson, Year 2 pupils enthusiastically applied their knowledge of spelling rules and mnemonics to write difficult words.
- Pupils' writing and mathematics books show that marking is regular. Pupils are often given precise feedback which helps them practise and refine key skills.
- Reading provision is strong. Staff foster a love of books in the pupils from an early age and maintain it

throughout the school. A dedicated library encourages pupils to read widely and for pleasure. Teachers expect pupils to read regularly and additional support is well focused for pupils who need additional help.

- Teachers give pupils many opportunities to write across the curriculum. Teachers use interesting resources, such as story maps and visits, as a stimulus for pupils' writing. Consequently, pupils enjoy writing and the quality of their written work, especially in Year 6, is high.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Work in pupils' books and monitoring records show evidence of improvement over time. A bespoke mathematics curriculum is developing pupils' reasoning, fluency and problem solving skills. Pupils are frequently asked by teachers to 'prove it' and 'convince me' in response to problem solving activities.
- Teaching is not outstanding because, in some topic work, such as geography, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not as high as they are in English and mathematics. As a result, the quality and standard of pupils' work is not of a consistently high standard across all classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. Carefully planned intervention programmes target pupils' specific needs. For example, a well-established talk programme is successful in supporting pupils with speech and language difficulties.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils start school with skills and abilities below those typical for their age, particularly in reading, writing and speaking. Timely and well-targeted support ensures that all pupils make good progress and develop good listening and concentration skills.
- Achievement in reading is good. The results of the Year 1 phonic check are typically average and represent good progress from pupils' low starting points. More pupils than previously are on track to do well in the phonic check because of the improved teaching of phonics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is slightly below the national average in reading and writing and broadly in line in mathematics. Achievement is not outstanding because not enough Year 2 pupils reach the highest levels in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1. Rightly, the school has raised expectations to increase the proportion of pupils who reach the highest Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have risen gradually since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment is typically above the national average in all subjects. Over time, the standards in writing have improved as pupils are given more opportunities to write for a specific purpose in a range of subjects. On a 'work we are proud of' display, pupils proudly shared their writing achievements with inspectors.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because they are taught well by highly qualified support staff. Pupils are supported effectively to work towards their specific targets. Over time, this group makes similar progress to their classmates.
- The large number of disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points, particularly in reading. In Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils were working about two and a half terms behind other pupils in the school, and two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics. They were working two and a half terms behind other pupils in the school and one term behind other pupils nationally in writing. In reading, the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, closed. The school's success in supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve well was recognised recently in a letter from the Minister of State for Schools.
- The most able pupils are regularly challenged, particularly in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils exceeding expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. For example, a group of most able Year 6 pupils receive regular tuition and were observed confidently attempting to calculate the volume and surface area of a cuboid. The success of the school's actions to improve standards for the most able is reflected in the marked increase in the number of pupils reaching the highest possible Level 6.
- The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Teachers remove language barriers and pupils are supported well in a range of lessons by adults and other pupils.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress in most areas of learning from their low starting points. The proportion achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is broadly in line with that found

nationally. Children acquire the skills needed to make a good start in the next stage of their education, particularly in developing relationships and listening skills.

- The early years provision is not outstanding because children have too few opportunities to make decisions and develop their independence in the outdoor learning area. As a result, their progress and development are hindered.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. The staff team works closely and shares a determination to improve children's outcomes. Teachers have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision and where further developments can be made.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers provide interesting activities which engage both boys and girls. For example, children eagerly made a list of resources needed for a 'journey to the jungle' and used their developing phonic skills to write lists, whilst others created animal masks to take to the jungle. Adults have high expectations of children and use regular assessment to set challenging activities.
- Disadvantaged children and those identified with special educational needs make good progress. Children with speech and language difficulties are provided with high quality specialist support and their speech and confidence are improving as a result.
- The children's behaviour is excellent. Children behave well in lessons and play together harmoniously. Children gain an understanding of risk and how to stay safe through their experiences of Forest School. They feel safe at school because adults pay good attention to their welfare and safety.
- Parents play an important part in helping children with their learning. They regularly contribute to children's individual learning journals (information from ongoing assessments) and receive progress reports from staff. Parents told inspectors that staff are 'approachable' and that they are 'part of the learning too'. This strong partnership promotes children's enthusiasm for learning.

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	115483
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	448672

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	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Fay
Headteacher	Angela Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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