

Laurel Lane Primary School

Laurel Lane, West Drayton, UB7 7TX

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Early years provision	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong enough to raise pupils' overall achievement to good. Pupils make stronger progress in some classes than others. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils.
- Pupils do not always have enough chances to write in order to develop fluent writing skills. This pattern is set from the early years. Pupils further up the school have too few chances to write on a wide range of interesting topics.
- Pupils are sometimes allowed to get away with work that has poor spelling and presentation. Adults do not always insist on high standards in writing.
- Feedback to pupils on their topic and science work is weaker than in English and mathematics. Pupils receive less guidance on how to improve and teachers sometimes do not insist that pupils correct their work.
- The most able pupils, in particular, do not achieve as well as they could. Sometimes, too little is expected of them, and they are set tasks that are too easy.
- Children in the early years behave well and successfully develop their social skills. They make less progress in developing language and number skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors have made great strides in improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Attainment and progress at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are improving, although they are not yet consistently good.
- Senior leaders are supported well by middle leaders. All make sure that groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, are doing better in their learning.
- Governors play an active role in the school. They provide effective support to leaders, and this is helping to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders work in effective partnership with schools within the academy trust, drawing on their expertise to help strengthen the quality of teaching.
- Leaders ensure that behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and all heritages get on well with one another. The school keeps pupils safe and helps them to keep themselves safe.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, giving pupils clear values and a sense of belonging.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons across a range of subjects. Over half were observed jointly with the executive headteacher or the head of school.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils, listened to them read and looked at samples of their work. An inspector met a group of pupils to hear their opinions about the school.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including those who hold responsibility for specific subjects. A meeting was held with a School Improvement Partner representing the academy trust. A meeting was held with the Chair of the governing body, one other governor and with the Chair of the academy board.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff in 38 questionnaires.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection, and took account of two parental questionnaires provided by the school. Inspectors also took into account the 11 responses to the online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own views of how well it is doing, its plans for the future and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kewal Goel

Additional Inspector

Joanna Franklin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Laurel Lane Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became an academy in April 2013 under the sponsorship and management of the London Diocesan Board of Schools Frays Academy Trust.
- The school is partnered with two local Church of England primary schools within the academy trust. The executive headteacher has all three schools within his remit. The school is managed by the head of school and has its own governing body.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education. He is chief executive to the academy trust and supports other local schools. The head of school took up her appointment when the school converted to academy status.
- The school has experienced considerable staff turnover.
- The early years leader is new to that post.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic heritages is higher than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, with no one group predominating.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school runs a breakfast club. After-school care is managed by an outside provider and is inspected separately.
- Children attend the Nursery part time, either in the morning or afternoon sessions. Children in Reception attend full time.
- 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 teaching so that pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is raised throughout the school, including in the early years, by:
 - teachers having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able
 - never accepting poor spelling or presentation in pupils' work
 - making sure that pupils have more opportunities to write fluently on a wide range of topics
 - ensuring the feedback that is given to pupils in their topic and science work matches the quality of English and mathematics, so that pupils are always guided about how to improve their work.
- Enable the children in the early years to improve their language and number skills to match the good progress they make in acquiring social skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have improved the school considerably in the two years since it gained academy status. A school culture where the quality of teaching is improving and pupils behave well has been established. School figures for this year show that pupils throughout the school are currently making stronger progress than they were a year ago. Inspectors looked at pupils' books from this year and last year and saw evidence of improvements in their learning.
- Leaders have improved behaviour. School records show that incidents of unruly behaviour have sharply declined. This is because leaders are vigilant about recording incidents, sharing concerns with parents, and taking effective and timely action. As a result, pupils from all faiths, heritages and backgrounds get on well together. There is no discrimination against others, and all have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Parents spoken to during breakfast club were largely positive about the improvements in the school. A few parents expressed concerns about the school through Parent View and through messages to inspectors. Their concerns were varied, with no common thread to raise alarm. Inspectors discussed concerns fully with the school and found that leaders were quick and effective in taking action to put things right.
- Leaders have been effective in improving teaching, because they manage the quality of teaching successfully, despite many changes of staff. Leaders are dealing effectively with this situation by ensuring that new staff are quickly trained in the high expectations that leaders have for the school. They draw on the experience of leaders and skilled practitioners in the schools within the academy trust to help teachers needing support. Their support has improved the quality of teaching overall. Staff show through their very positive responses to the questionnaire that they back the leaders in bringing about improvement.
- Leaders benefit from the expert advice and guidance provided by the academy trust. The School Improvement Partner, provided by the trust, gives strong support to leaders in assessing the quality of teaching and learning in the early years provision and the school as a whole. The Chair of the academy board supports governors so they are confident in understanding how to hold school leaders to account.
- Leaders have improved how they make checks on pupils' progress. Their findings are detailed and clear. As a result, all stakeholders, including governors, can readily check how well pupils are learning.
- Middle leaders, such as the inclusion manager and subject leaders, have an effective partnership with senior leaders. Together, all leaders work to check how well groups of pupils are learning. As a result, pupils' achievement is on an upward trend. This particularly benefits such groups as disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding. These pupils do as well as other pupils and, in some cases, better because of accurate checks on their learning and well-targeted support.
- The additional funding for primary sports is used effectively to introduce pupils to a wide variety of new activities. It also enables pupils to take part in more competitions with other schools. Consequently, pupils gain confidence in a range of physical activities.
- Pupils learn a broad range of subjects that prepare them adequately for the next stage of school. Though pupils' learning is growing stronger, the quality of their writing is not yet good. They are sometimes allowed to present work that is not as good as it could be. Teachers do not always insist that work is presented neatly and carefully in all subjects, with accurate spelling. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to write fluently across a range of topics.
- Pupils learn a great deal about the world around them, and this prepares them well for growing up in modern Britain. The vibrant displays around the building reflect the interesting topics pupils study, including outer space and the Second World War. They learn British values in many ways. For example, they understand democracy through the democratically elected school council. Pupils learn to respect themselves and others through assemblies and through the school's strong promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school keeps pupils safe through its effective and rigorous safeguarding arrangements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are increasingly effective. They are enthusiastic and strongly engaged in the life of the school. They visit it often to test its work for themselves. They have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing in relation to those in other schools. Governors are well informed of pupils' achievement through published data and through informative reports from the head of school.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of the teaching. They recognise that, overall, it requires improvement. With leaders, they have identified what needs to be done, and have drawn up a teaching and learning improvement plan that is beginning to show impact. Minutes of meetings show they are not afraid to hold leaders to account. Governors confirm that the school is improving and that leaders are having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and achievement.

- Governors keep a firm hand on the school’s budget, and this ensures that they get value for money from their expenditure on staff pay. Working in effective partnership with the academy trust and with school leaders, they successfully reward good teaching and are not afraid to take action to tackle underperformance. This is because they understand the management of staff performance and the systems for giving staff targets for improvement. They provide valuable assistance to school leaders in assessing whether or not staff meet these targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy learning and are attentive in class. Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils are not exceptionally eager to learn, for example, by demanding extra work when they have finished.
- Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors, ready to hold doors open. They play peaceably together in the playground, and line up promptly when the bell is rung.
- Pupils get on well with one another. There is little name-calling or arguing. Pupils from all heritages and backgrounds work and play together harmoniously.
- Incidents of bad behaviour have dropped dramatically. This is because leaders are vigilant in recording all incidents and taking rapid action to prevent them happening again.
- Breakfast club provides a valuable start to the day for the large number of pupils who attend. The food is healthy, offering pupils a wide choice. Parents are welcomed into the hall, and this provides good opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to mingle and exchange views.
- Pupils’ enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which is rising and is, currently, average when compared to other schools nationally.
- The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For instance in one assembly observed by inspectors, pupils were encouraged to ‘sing out’, and this contributed to a strong community feeling. The assembly brought out pupils’ spiritual development by celebrating the approach to Easter, and pupils showed through their good behaviour that they enjoyed belonging to the school.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is secure. Adults who come into contact with children are scrupulously checked. Staff and governors are well trained in safeguarding.
- The school thinks ahead about any possible risks when taking pupils out on trips and visits.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school. They understand different types of bullying, such as physical, verbal or cyber bullying, and report that there is no bullying at the school. Occasionally, pupils fall out with one another, but this is quickly resolved by adults.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are taught ways of dealing with danger, for example from using computers or from strangers.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not consistently raise pupils’ achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching varies across year groups and, occasionally, across classes within the same year group.
- The most able pupils are not always set sufficiently demanding tasks to enable them to achieve as well as they could. Some teachers do not always expect enough from them. Pupils are not consistently given challenging work to take them further forward in their learning. As a result, too few pupils gain the top grades.
- Staff often do not give pupils a good grounding in writing. Pupils, from the youngest onward, do not have enough opportunities to improve their skills by writing on a range of topics. Their spelling and presentation are sometimes weak, and the staff do not always correct this. As a result, pupils do not always try hard enough.
- Pupils are sometimes allowed to present scrappy work in their topic and science books. Less is expected of them than in English and mathematics. Feedback to pupils is weaker, giving less guidance to pupils on how they can improve.
- The school recognises that not all pupils have an instinctive love of reading. Leaders have begun to tackle this by improving reading lessons, so that pupils explore a range of good quality books.

- Leaders quickly identified that pupils were not benefiting enough from mathematics teaching. This was because teachers were not clear about what they were expected to teach. Leaders established an overall framework, so that teachers are now clear about the skills pupils need to learn each year in order to progress to the next step. This action has begun to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- Classrooms are pleasant places in which to learn. There are good relationships between adults and pupils. Wall displays in classrooms are stimulating, and include examples of pupils' best work.
- Teaching assistants work in effective partnership with teachers, supporting pupils of various abilities and with various needs. They provide valuable and knowledgeable support to pupils in class and in smaller groups.
- Leaders' efforts to improve teaching are having positive impact. Some teaching gives pupils a chance to use their imagination as well as to practise their skills. In two parallel Year 6 English lessons, for example, the topic, to write a science fiction story, excited the pupils and gave them the chance to picture new worlds. At the same time, pupils improved their writing skills, learning how punctuation and vocabulary can be used to create tension and stimulate the reader's curiosity.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, overall, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average, and their progress has not been strong enough to raise their attainment.
- The most able pupils in particular do not do as well as they could. Figures for 2014 and 2015 show that the most able pupils were below average in attaining Level 5 or above in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 6. This reflects the lower expectations some teachers had for the most able pupils.
- Leaders' efforts to improve achievement are having positive impact. Currently, better teaching is helping pupils to make better progress and attain more in many classes. Inspection evidence from observations of teaching and learning and pupils' work fully endorsed the improvement in pupils' achievement, although it is not yet consistently good.
- Vulnerable groups are carefully supported. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who struggle with their work, receive helpful support in class, in small withdrawal groups and with one-to-one support. This additional help enables them to make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support. Learning support assistants are trained in meeting their needs, for example by using visual clues to help pupils gain in confidence when they start school. Such careful support helps them to make progress in developing their language skills. Overall, their progress matches and often exceeds that of other pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from determined and concerted action by leaders, middle leaders and governors in securing effective support that meets their needs. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of others in the school in all subjects, and make similar progress to other pupils in schools across the country.
- In 2014, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils at the school, compared with other pupils nationally, were half a year behind in reading, two and a half terms behind in writing, and a year behind in mathematics. Compared with other pupils in the school, they were two and a half terms ahead in reading and mathematics, and two terms ahead in writing. Inspection evidence, including school projections for 2015, shows that attainment is rising for both disadvantaged and other pupils, and that gaps in attainment are narrowing.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because it does not give children the best possible start to their education. They do not make enough progress in their learning to raise their skills.
- The new early years leader has made a promising start in identifying areas needing improvement, but has not yet had time to make a full impact. Senior leaders include early years in their whole-school planning, and the School Improvement Partner has evaluated the schools work in this area of the school. However, important aspects of early years remain in need of improvement.
- Children's progress is not checked carefully or consistently enough to enable adults to provide the best support for them. As a result, children do not make good progress in acquiring language and number skills. Their progress is not strong enough to give them the best possible start in learning to read, write

and understand numbers and shapes. For example, children do not yet gain good grounding in phonics (sounds and corresponding letters) for them to tackle the phonics screening check with confidence after they have entered Year 1.

- Staff are more successful in improving children's social skills. Children are friendly and confident. They are ready to share the equipment. For example, a group of four children were keen to 'paint' on the interactive whiteboard at the same time. The touch screen would not allow this. When the class teacher explained the need to take turns, three children willingly got on with other activities and each had a turn in the end.
- The activities put out for the children are inviting. However, adults are not always at hand to make sure that children make the best use of the activities, and to help them to develop language and thinking skills.
- Activities do not always promote children's writing skills enough. As a result, children go into Year 1 without the grounding in letter formation and fluency of writing they need to do well in their writing.
- Reading skills are promoted more strongly. Adults regularly read with the children. Children in the Reception classes get a sound start in learning to recognise the sounds that letters make (phonics).
- Staffs promote children's number skills adequately, but there is sometimes too little challenge in the tasks for the most able.
- Children enter the Nursery with basic skills that vary considerably, but that are generally below what is typical for their age. By the time children leave Reception, their skills remain below what is typical for their age.

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	139275
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	449828

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Becky Hughes
Headteacher	Chris Cole (Executive Headteacher), Sandra Voisey (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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