

Laindon Park Primary School

Church Hill, Laindon, Basildon, SS15 5SE

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- Laindon Park Primary is a rapidly improving school, where pupils feel happy and safe.
- There are effective procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe and protected. Pupils are safe at school because staff look after them well.
- Pupils show a keen interest in learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders, governors and other staff work well together to ensure that pupils benefit from good teaching and achieve well.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show care and consideration for others. They are friendly and polite and the school prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Provision and leadership in the early years are good. Children learn well in both the Nursery and Reception classes the school prepares them well for the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Attainment in most years is broadly average, but rose at Key Stage 1 in 2014 to be significantly above average. Attainment in reading was below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014.
- Standards are rising because of the rapid progress most pupils are making, as a result of improvements to teaching since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not ensure that the less able achieve as well as they can in writing in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Not enough teaching leads to outstanding progress because not all teachers have had the opportunity to learn from the best practice that exists in the school.
- Parents' views of the school are polarised. While most are very pleased with the school, a significant but small minority are unhappy with it. They feel that the school has not always satisfactorily addressed their concerns.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the school in 26 sessions. Two were seen jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspector observed learning in all year groups.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in books and on classroom displays. They listened to pupils reading and attended assemblies.
- Inspectors met with all leaders in the school and a group of governors. They held discussions with the Programme Director of the Basildon Excellence Panel and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team met with groups of pupils and talked to them during lessons, in the playground, in the dining hall, at breakfast and after school clubs and as they moved around the school. Pupils took inspectors on a ‘curriculum tour’ of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They spoke informally with parents at the start of the day and had a number of telephone conversations with parents throughout the inspection. They also considered information from the school’s own parent questionnaire.
- The inspection team took into account questionnaire returns completed by 19 members of staff.
- The team reviewed many school documents. These included development plans, policies, records of monitoring, safeguarding and planning records, information for families, and governing body documents.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Judith Carter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Laindon Park is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a deputy headteacher, a mathematics subject leader and a special educational needs co-ordinator. The Early Years leader has returned from leave.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The early years consists of two part-time Nursery class and one full-time Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after school club each day.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise achievement by
 - setting tasks for the lower attaining writers in Key Stage 2 to help them to make more rapid progress, so that they can catch-up with their classmates
 - ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to learn from the best practice which exists in the school, so that more teaching leads to outstanding progress
 - making sure that marking and feedback to pupils in Key Stage 2 always helps them to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Improve leadership and management by taking specific action to engage effectively with, understand and provide for, the needs and concerns of those parents who are dissatisfied with the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by all leaders in the school, has established an atmosphere in which teachers and pupils feel valued, behave well and want to do their best. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and pupils want to come to school. This is reflected in their attendance which has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- As a result of recruiting strong senior leaders, the school has successfully tackled the key areas for improvement from the previous inspection. With the headteacher, they have taken effective action to eradicate weaker teaching.
- The school's own evaluation of how well it is doing is accurate. Staff regularly review improvement plans, which focus on teaching and achievement, to ensure they are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Plans make clear what teachers need to do in order to accelerate progress in specific aspects of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Good leadership of mathematics has helped to raise attainment across the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their skills in mathematics to other curriculum areas.
- Similarly, good leadership of English has helped to raise attainment in reading and writing throughout the school. Professional development and support for teachers has ensured that they teach phonics sessions (where pupils learn how sounds are represented by different letters) and daily group reading sessions well.
- Some teachers have benefited from working closely with colleagues, sharing the most effective practice that exists in the school. This has led to some pupils making outstanding progress. However, not all teachers have such good opportunities to develop their skills so that all pupils make outstanding progress.
- The gaps in the attainment of girls and boys has been narrowed in all subjects this year because of the guidance leaders have provided for teachers to help them meet pupils' needs and make lessons interesting.
- The school's tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous and the assessment arrangements in place to support the national curriculum have been implemented across the school. This means that any pupil who is at risk of underachieving is identified quickly and teaching is adjusted to make certain they get the extra help they need.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive. They fully meet statutory requirements and are effective in ensuring the pupils are kept safe.
- Extra funds to support disadvantaged pupils are used well. The school regularly reviews the impact of pupil premium funding on the progress of eligible pupils. This reflects the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. There are no signs of discrimination of any kind in the school.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport grant well to extend pupils' opportunities. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports. In particular, they benefit from specialist martial arts teaching. This recently resulted in a whole school exhibition and celebration which parents attended. The funding has also meant that pupils are able to enjoy a range of after-school clubs, one of which is run in partnership with a popular football club. A 'girls-only' sports club has engaged a large number of girls who previously did not take part in any sports activities outside school.
- The curriculum promotes British values well. Assemblies explore themes which focus on mutual respect for and tolerance of different faiths. The school council demonstrates the values of democracy through gathering views from all pupils, sharing them with senior leaders and making decisions about how they would like to improve the school.

- The school provides a broad and interesting range of subjects which promote good achievement for pupils and contribute well to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils enjoy the additional activities provided, such as clubs and educational visits.
- Senior, subject and early years' leaders have a significant impact on school improvement because of effective delegation and because they are highly skilled in their areas of responsibility. Both the mathematics and the English subject leaders provide good models of teaching in their subject. Senior leaders also support the recently qualified special needs coordinator to manage provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs effectively, as she develops the different aspects of her role.
- Most parents would recommend the school to others. Most say that their children are doing well, that the school is a 'good community school' and that the teachers are 'really kind to the children'. However, the headteacher and the governors are well aware that there is a small minority of parents who express dissatisfaction with the school.
- Some parents feel that communication with the school does not meet their individual children's needs well. A few say that the school does not listen to them or that it ignores their concerns and some have not felt confident to share their views. Leaders are working on new ways to communicate better and engage with these parents.
- The local authority has a good understanding of the school's performance. It devolves its school improvement role to the Basildon Excellence Panel who provide good support and advice. This ensures that the school collaborates with other schools to share and help each other in raising pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The governing body performs all its statutory duties effectively. It carries out skills audits and governors keep themselves up-to-date with appropriate training.
 - Governors responded positively to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection and have worked diligently to ensure that they challenge and support the school effectively. Governors have a clear overview of the school's performance through their understanding of published data. They are aware of the impact of the pupil premium and sports funding and they challenge leaders to make the best possible use of the funds available.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They are familiar with requirements relating to the management of staff performance. They support the headteacher in tackling underperformance. Governors ensure teachers' pay is linked to the progress that their pupils make. In addition, they seek appropriate external advice when they undertake the headteacher's performance management.
 - Governors take an active part in the life of the school and are regular visitors. Pupils say, 'Governors are always here'. They support with pupils' reading and accompany pupils on school trips. The Chair of the Governing Body also undertakes an 'I can' project with pupils in the school to help them aspire to achieve well in life.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils get on well with each other and have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils talk with pride about their achievements. They are keen to share their work and show how well they are doing. In lessons, they are attentive, co-operative and work well in pairs or in groups.
- Pupils play harmoniously at playtimes and at breakfast and after-school club. They chatted confidently and happily to inspectors during lunchtimes, which are civilised, sociable occasions. Lunchtime staff and supervisors know the pupils well and keep order in a friendly, supportive way. There is a strong sense of community.

- Pupils are unreservedly polite, friendly and respectful. They welcome visitors and quickly embrace them as part of the community. The school's strong promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is ensuring that Laindon Park pupils are growing into mature, engaging young citizens.
- Attendance is improving and has risen to the national average during the past year, having been very low previously. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say 'everything is fun' and their eagerness to learn makes a positive contribution to their overall progress.
- Pupils feel valued and say that they are listened to and are able to 'vote on things' via the school council.
- Pupils understand the systems for managing behaviour and staff use them consistently.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Leaders and staff take effective measures to ensure that the school cares for and protects all pupils well. The vast majority of parents say that their children feel safe at school.
- Good systems for checking and recording safety matters ensure that staff deal with concerns or issues promptly. Staff and governors receive appropriate, up-to-date training on child protection. The school provides safeguarding information to visitors that is explicit and comprehensive.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They understand about all forms of bullying and learn about how to keep themselves safe through assemblies and activities in the classroom. Key Stage 2 classroom displays offer guidance and reminders about internet safety.
- Staff establish strong relationships with pupils, who know they can turn to trusted adults if they are worried or upset.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved steadily since the last inspection and more rapidly in the past year.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that they give all pupils the support they need during lessons to complete tasks and to understand what is being taught. They also develop pupils' confidence in themselves as learners because of the supportive climate which pervades the school. Pupils know that staff care about their achievement and want them to do well.
- Teachers set tasks for the most-able pupils which challenge them and enable them to achieve the higher levels. Teaching assistants often work with the most-able pupils to stretch them and deepen their thinking. This has a good impact on the progress that they make.
- Teachers organise enjoyable activities which inspire pupils to think and develop their ideas. For example, Year 1 pupils developed their storytelling skills well through role-play. Year 6 pupils responded positively to the challenge to create 'back to front' sentences in their writing lessons. Year 2 pupils successfully explored place value by working on solving money problems. Year 4 pupils' interest was captured in measuring perimeter by showing them video footage of footballers measuring the perimeter of a football pitch.
- Staff absences and staff changes in 2014 adversely affected pupils' progress and attainment in reading. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to promote and prioritise reading in the school. The teaching of reading is now consistently good across the school. This is because of the recruitment of strong teachers and the good leadership and guidance to improve teaching provided by senior leaders.

- Teachers and teaching assistants teach reading skills every day and this has led to the rapid improvements in attainment and progress across the school. Good phonics teaching across the early years and Key Stage 1 ensures that pupils learn to decode words rapidly. This means that they are able to benefit from the effective teaching of comprehension skills in daily group-reading sessions for all classes.
- The teaching of mathematics is good, with the focus on using mathematics skills across the curriculum evident in books and on displays.
- The teaching of writing is a good. Pupils enjoy stimulating themes and subjects to write about and have opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences. The exciting trips out of school inspire pupils to write. For example, Reception children made individual books to recount their trip to the museum.
- The strongest teaching is across Key Stage 1 and in Year 6 and leads to some pupils making outstanding progress. Teachers in these year groups explicitly show pupils how to be successful in their learning. They give pupils space and time to talk and learn together. This deepens their knowledge and understanding. Verbal feedback and marking in these classes are very specific so that teachers leave pupils in no doubt about what they need to do to improve.
- Occasionally, in Years 3, 4 and 5, teachers give the less-able writers tasks which are too hard and do not help them make the rapid progress they need to in order to catch up with their classmates. Activities do not always help them use their spelling and grammar skills effectively enough. Adults do not always show pupils what they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers have worked hard to implement a consistent approach to marking since the previous inspection. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers in Year 3, 4 and 5 do not always give guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve their work so they can make the rapid progress that could lead to outstanding achievement.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils are achieving well from their starting points. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, overall attainment was above the national average for the first time. This trend is set to continue. Across Key Stage 1, pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics because of the consistently good teaching that they benefit from.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, attainment was broadly average overall, in writing, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics, writing, grammar punctuation and spelling was broadly average but in reading it was well below average. Attainment in reading was significantly below average because of weaknesses in teaching reading and in checking the progress pupils were making over time. This meant that there were gaps in pupils' reading skills which were not addressed prior to the Year 6 tests.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained lower standards than their classmates in reading and were behind by about two terms. In writing, disadvantaged pupils were a term and a half ahead of their classmates and in mathematics their achievement was in line with their classmates. When they are compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils at Laindon Park were broadly in line with them in writing, but a year and a half behind in reading and a term and a half behind in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils, along with all other pupils, are currently making good, often rapid progress. As a result, gaps are closing.
- In 2014, girls attained lower standards than boys in the school in all subjects. School assessments and work in books show that attainment gaps have now closed and girls are achieving as well as boys in the current Year 6. There is little difference between the progress boys and girls are making across the school.
- The school's own data, together with pupils' work seen during the inspection, show that attainment is improving rapidly, particularly in reading. Most pupils in Year 6 are working at or above national expectations in all subjects and over a third of them are confidently working at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The most-able pupils in all year groups are making good progress and reaching the higher levels. This is a major improvement for pupils in Key Stage 2. The most-able writers in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 have made outstanding progress this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics as their classmates.
- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development across all areas of learning at the end of the Reception in 2014 was well above the national average. Assessments show that this is on track to rise further this year.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was well above the national average in 2014. This represents good achievement. It is a result of the school's approach to teaching systematic phonics across the early years and Key Stage 1. Pupils' work shows that they are using the skills taught in their phonics lessons to help them to write well.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are making good progress. Boys in Year 5 talked enthusiastically to inspectors about the books they have read. One pupil, who had read several Shakespeare stories, talked animatedly about his preference for 'Macbeth'. Pupils enjoy books from a range of reading schemes alongside a range of literature and 'real' books that the school has to offer.
- Pupils write frequently and at length, in different subjects for a range of interesting purposes and audiences. Most of the pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are making rapid progress in writing and are working at levels which are above those typically seen for their age. All pupils make at least good progress in writing in Key Stage 2 but the lower attaining writers in Years 3, 4 and 5 do not always make the rapid progress they need to 'catch up' with their classmates because work set is sometimes too difficult for them.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics skills and teachers give them good opportunities to use these skills in a range of subjects and themes.
- The marking and feedback pupils receive in all year groups about their mathematics and writing work tell them what they have done well and what they have achieved. This is a strong feature of marking in Years 1, 2 and 6. However, in Years 3, 4 and 5, feedback does not always help pupils to understand what they need to do next in order to improve and make rapid progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Nursery class with knowledge, understanding and skills often typical for their age except in communication, language and literacy. In these areas, their skills are less well developed. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of good teaching. Adults given them an interesting and, as the children say, 'fun' range of activities. Children are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Teachers place good emphasis on developing early reading, writing and communication skills and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is particularly effective. This helps pupils to make good gains in their learning.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The early years leader ensures that staff plan all areas of learning well for both inside and outside the classroom. She has also introduced thorough systems to keep a careful check on children's progress and supports staff in planning effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. The majority of parents also contribute to progress checks either at meetings in school or on-line at home.
- All parents who spoke to inspectors about the early years provision speak extremely highly of it. They say that their children are safe, well cared for and achieving well. They value activities which involve them in their children's learning. For example, 'Felix the fox' goes home with a Reception child every week and parents write about what he did in his diary.

- Relationships between staff and children, in both the Nursery and the Reception classes, are warm and caring. Staff keep pupils safe and secure and as a result of this, pupils' behaviour is good.

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	114802
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	462120

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Larkin
Headteacher	Cristina Portoles
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2013
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