

Lime Walk Primary School

Lime Walk, Bennetts End, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9LN

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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 a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment and progress declined after the last inspection and is too variable. Pupils' progress is not consistently good in Years 3 to 6.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2014 was below average in writing, and pupils had not made enough progress in this area.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is weaker than in reading and mathematics. This is not helped by lack of sufficient practise in writing when pupils work in English and other subjects.
- Teaching has not been strong enough over time to promote consistently good progress for most pupils.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Teachers' marking is not consistent in helping pupils to improve.
- At times, in geography, history and science, work is not sufficiently challenging because, in these instances, pupils are not extended to think about how best to organise information and present data.
- Children in early years do not always receive sufficient guidance and instruction from adults to help improve their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The relatively new headteacher brings ambition, enthusiasm and high expectations to the school.
- The headteacher, other leaders and staff work well as a team and are taking decisive action to raise pupils' achievement and to improve teaching. This action is having a positive impact.
- Governance is much improved since the previous inspection. Governors now provide good oversight of the school's work and hold leaders to account for its performance.
- Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are courteous, kind and friendly. They show consideration and respect for others, and an appreciation and understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are effective. Pupils feel safe and well looked after by the staff.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and analysed information about their attainment and progress.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, a representative from the local authority, the governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of nine questionnaire returns from staff.
- A range of documents were examined, including school policies, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Crane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- About two thirds of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- A well above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in Nursery attend mornings only. The children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The current headteacher took up his post in June 2014. There were a number of teacher changes in 2014.
- The leader of special educational needs joined the school in April 2014 and the leader of early years in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that pupils make good or better progress over time, and raise pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, particularly in writing by:
 - ensuring that all work set is at the right level of difficulty for pupils, particularly the most able
 - making sure that the marking of pupils' work helps them to improve
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to write detailed and extended pieces in English and in other subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to organise and present data in subjects other than mathematics
 - providing more guidance and instruction to support and improve children's learning in early years.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The relatively new headteacher brings enthusiasm to his post and demonstrates ambition and determination to improve the school. Senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and governors share his ambition. The headteacher, working with a new leadership team, has established a positive culture for school improvement. Teamwork is strong and leaders and staff strive to improve teaching so that pupils can achieve their best.
- Leaders and staff have created a positive and welcoming ethos where pupils can thrive. All staff promote good behaviour and ensure that all pupils are safe. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective and robust.
- Through rigorous and systematic checking, the headteacher and other leaders have an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and the areas in need of improvement. Pupils are making faster progress because of the action taken but progress is not consistently good in all classes in Years 3 to 6. However, the under-achievement of the past in mathematics and writing has been arrested and is now being reversed, especially in mathematics.
- Considerable emphasis is placed on improving teaching and inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Leaders provide effective coaching, training and support to help improve teachers' practice and skills. Newly qualified teachers receive good guidance from experienced colleagues. The stronger teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. However, leaders are fully aware that there is more to do before teaching and pupils' progress are consistently good in all classes.
- The arrangements for the management of teachers' performance were inadequate at the last inspection. Performance management is much improved and is now making a clear contribution to improving teaching. Targets set to improve teachers' practice and skills are well linked to pupils' progress and to the priorities in the school's improvement plan.
- Subject leadership is developing well, especially in mathematics. The relatively new leaders of the early years and special educational needs bring good experience to the school and have already made a considerable impact on improving provision in their areas of responsibility.
- Lime Walk provides a broad and balanced range of subjects. Effective action has been taken to improve pupils' learning in mathematics. Provision for reading is improving and action is being taken to strengthen writing. Leaders and staff have made a good start in implementing new arrangements for assessing pupils' progress. Pupils' learning and enjoyment are enriched by a wide range of additional activities such as clubs and educational visits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted. Leaders and staff have identified core values to be taught and promoted throughout the school. These values include: caring for others, honesty, determination, interdependence, self-belief and respect for others. The school has successfully shared these values with pupils, parents and governors. These values and the school's curriculum prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The use of the pupil premium has improved recently. Pupils at risk of underachieving are swiftly identified and well-targeted support is provided to increase their progress, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is used effectively to promote pupils' physical development and to extend their sporting opportunities. Under the current leadership, opportunities for pupils to participate in sports clubs and local competitions have increased.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school tackles all forms of discrimination. Staff strive to ensure that all pupils have full access to the learning opportunities provided.
- The local authority has provided good advice and support to the school and to the governing body.

Through regular visits and accurate reviews, the local authority has a clear overview of the school's performance. Leaders and staff have been receptive to the local authority's support.

■ The governance of the school:

- Through successful training and support, governance is much improved since the previous inspection and is now effective.
- Members of the governing body have high aspirations and are keen for the school to improve to good.
- Governors have an accurate and realistic overview of the school's past and current performance. Governors analyse the data well and have a good understanding of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Governors have a clear view of the quality of teaching and how it is improving because of the action taken by leaders. They understand requirements relating to the management of teachers' performance, and ensure that promotion and salary increases are based on the progress that pupils make. They check that effective action is taken to improve teaching that is less than good.
- Governors ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used properly and question the impact of spending on pupils' achievement.
- Governors are supportive of the leaders, staff and pupils. They now have a sharper understanding of the school's performance, and this enables them to challenge leaders and hold the school to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Good behaviour starts in the early years and continues through to Year 6. Pupils are well behaved in lessons, in assembly, the dining hall and around the school. The school's clear records of incidents show that pupils' behaviour is typically good.
- Throughout the school, pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They settle to lessons quickly and respond well to their teachers' instructions and questioning. They told inspectors, 'we learn new things everyday' and 'it is fun to learn' and 'there are now more clubs to join'.
- Pupils demonstrate the values that the school promotes in their day-to-day learning and play. They are caring, courteous, cooperative, kind, friendly and are respectful to others. Through their studies and local visits to places of worship, pupils have developed an appreciation and a good understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities, such as serving on the school council and older pupils helping the younger ones.
- Attendance levels have been low in recent years. Attendance is steadily improving because of the comprehensive range of actions taken by the school, particularly by the Family Liaison Officer. However, attendance is still below average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are clear and regularly reviewed. All staff have received recent training in child protection and safeguarding matters. A number of staff hold first aid qualifications. Leaders and staff take effective measures to ensure that pupils are well cared for and protected.
- The parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, stated that their children are happy at school and feel safe. Pupils themselves told the inspectors that they feel safe and are well looked after by the staff. They were confident that they can turn to trusted adults if they are worried about anything.
- Leaders and staff carry out risk assessments to the school buildings and site. Thorough risk assessments are also carried out to ensure that pupils are safe on school journeys. The school takes its responsibilities for the safer recruitment of staff seriously and pre-employment checks are robust. Effective and robust procedures help to ensure that all pupils are safe at school.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at home and at school. For example, they demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe when using computers and the internet.
- Discussions with a number of pupils show that they have clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it might take, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. These discussions and the school's records of incidents confirm that bullying in the school is rare. Pupils informed the inspectors that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, are quickly sorted out by staff.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has been too varied to promote consistently good progress for most groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been consistently high across the school in the past. At the time of the previous inspection, there were weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics and this had an adverse impact on pupils' achievement in this subject.
- The current senior leaders have made the development of teaching a key priority. The actions taken have led to marked improvements. The better teaching is having a positive impact on pupils by ensuring that they catch-up on missed work and make up for weaker learning in the past. However, there are still some weaknesses to be overcome before teaching and pupils' progress are consistently good in all classes.
- In some lessons, the work set is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most-able. When this happens, pupils do not make the progress they should because activities are too easy for them. This is particularly noticeable in subjects such as geography, history and science.
- In geography, history and science lessons, pupils are often required to complete tables and charts provided by the teacher. This limits their learning because it makes the work too easy for many. It also means that pupils do not have the opportunity to think for themselves how the data and information they are collecting should be presented.
- Positive steps are being taken to improve pupils' writing skills. There is a clear emphasis on developing pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, teachers are not providing sufficient opportunities for pupils, particularly the most-able writers, to write detailed and extended pieces in English and other subjects.
- The marking of pupils' work is being strengthened. Teachers identify pupils' good work and provide encouragement and praise. However, comments to help pupils to improve their learning and work are less consistent in relation to the requirements of the school's policy. Consequently, marking is not having a consistently good impact on improving pupils' learning.
- Pupils know and understand what they are expected to learn because the teacher effectively shares the purpose of the lesson with the class. Teachers use demonstrations and explanations well to promote pupils' learning. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking, explore their ideas and check that they have understood the work.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and make an effective contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need extra help with literacy and numeracy.
- The teaching of reading is improving including phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Teachers promote an enjoyment of reading. Older pupils have good opportunities to apply their reading skills to find useful information.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils are taught calculation skills effectively. Teachers clearly explain and demonstrate mathematical operations. They provide good opportunities for pupils to apply knowledge and skills to solve relevant problems. The work

set in mathematics is challenging and well suited to the abilities and needs of different groups. Most pupils are making good progress in mathematics.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because it has been too varied between subjects since the last inspection. While the school's assessments and pupils' work show that pupils are currently making faster progress, it is not consistently good in all classes in Years 3 to 6.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 made better progress, than pupils had in 2013, in reading and mathematics, and reached broadly average standards. However, their attainment was below average in writing, and this group of pupils made inadequate progress in this area through Years 3 to 6. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013 and in 2014. Weaknesses in teaching contributed to these outcomes.
- In 2014, the Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards than the others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The disadvantaged pupils were about 18 months behind in reading, about 16 months in mathematics and over six months behind in writing compared to others in the school.
- When compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils at Lime Walk were about 16 months behind in reading and writing and about a year behind in mathematics. Sharper identification of pupils' needs, stronger teaching and well-targeted support are helping to ensure that gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and the others are closing in most classes.
- The achievement of the most-able is improving but is not consistently good. In 2014, a below average proportion of Year 2 pupils attained the higher levels. In Year 6, an average proportion of pupils attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics, but not enough pupils gained the higher levels in writing. The most-able pupils are not always extended enough, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is less strong than reading and mathematics. They write for a range of purposes. Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well. However, pupils are not always writing detailed and extended pieces. Furthermore, pupils are not applying and developing their writing skills well enough in subjects other than English.

Pupils' progress in Year 3 to 6 is not consistently good in all classes and between subjects. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others. Standards in the current Year 6 are predicted to be below average but this is a small year group with lower attaining pupils who joined the school later.. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are making good progress and the current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The headteacher, other leaders and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement. Sharper identification of pupils' needs, stronger teaching and well-targeted support are helping to ensure that gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and the others are closing.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving because of strong leadership and better teaching. Pupils receive well-focused and specific support that meets their needs. Most are making good progress now.
- In reading, the proportion of pupils that reached the required standard in the check of pupils' knowledge of phonics at the end of Year 1 was below average in 2013 and 2014. The current Year 1 are on track to improve on these results. Pupils enjoy reading at school and at home. Older pupils acquire and apply more advanced reading skills well.
- There have been considerable improvements to mathematics since the previous inspection. Most pupils are now achieving well in mathematics. Pupils' mental calculations have improved. Pupils apply

mathematical skills well to solve a range of challenging and relevant problems.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills below the levels typical for their age, particularly in communication, literacy, language, number and understanding of the world.
- The early years provision requires improvement because children's progress has not been consistently good since the previous inspection. In 2014, too few children achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception. Boys' achieved less well than the girls, especially in reading, writing and number. Weaknesses in teaching contributed to these low outcomes.
- Teaching is improving but it is not yet ensuring that most children make good progress in all areas. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development for 2015 is much improved on the 2014 outcomes. At times, children do not receive enough guidance and instruction from adults to help them to improve their learning or move onto their next step in learning.
- The relatively new leader has taken effective action to strengthen teaching and improve children's progress. There have been considerable improvements to the outdoor learning opportunities. Children are making faster progress and attainment by the end of Reception, while below average, is on course to be much better than last year. Steps are being taken to close the gaps between the achievement of boys and girls. The early years is well led and managed.
- Adults promote children's speaking and listening skills well by using prompts and questioning. Role play is also used effectively to develop children's language and creativity.
- Children are making good progress in phonics and make steady progress in early writing skills. They use non-standard measures to investigate how much water different containers hold. They recognise numbers and correctly order them from 0 to 10 and beyond.
- Children enjoy their learning and are making good progress in their personal and social development. They are well looked after and protected. Children feel safe, grow in confidence and relate well to adults and to their peers. They share learning resources and show consideration for others. Improvements to the provision and to children's progress mean that they are better prepared for Year 1 than before. Their good social skills and positive attitudes make them ready for learning in 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

Unique reference number	117333
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	462096

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Piper
Headteacher	Rob Hutchings
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2013
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