

Lynsted and Norton Primary School

Lynsted Lane, Lynsted, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0RL

Inspection dates	19–20 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The strong leadership of the new headteacher has brought about recent improvements, but there is still work to do for the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes to be consistently good across the school.
- Teaching requires improvement because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. There is effective teaching in some classes, but this is not consistent across all year groups.
- Work given is not always challenging enough and this limits pupils' progress, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Guidance for pupils on their work is not consistently clear to help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Teaching in early years does not build strongly enough on children's starting points. As a result teaching and outcomes, although improving, are not yet good.
- Support from teaching assistants for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is not always effective enough to ensure that they make fast progress.
- Pupil outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics require improvement. Standards, especially in writing, are not at the expected levels. Too few pupils make good progress and reach the higher standards they are capable of achieving.
- The monitoring by leaders, including the local board (the accountability and standards committee), has not been robust and focused sharply enough on pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders' roles are limited and have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching because monitoring is not regular or in sufficient depth.

The school has the following strengths

- The new and effective headteacher has galvanised staff and implemented rigorous systems to improve the work of the school, which have already had a positive impact.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have considerable confidence in the adults who look after them. They have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social

good. There is a positive culture in classes.

and cultural development effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in writing, by:
 - making sure that teachers plan tasks suited to the needs and abilities of all pupils so that they make at least good progress in lessons
 - making sure the most able pupils are given opportunities to think deeply in order to extend their learning and understanding
 - ensuring that pupils receive clear and concise information about their work so that they know how to improve it
 - improving the quality of support and challenge for pupils with special educational needs or disability so that it is consistently effective
 - ensuring that pupils use their writing skills more widely in different subjects
 - providing more opportunities to write longer pieces of work.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and members of the accountability and standards committee:
 - ensuring that leaders, including the accountability and standards committee, more rigorously monitor the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that middle leaders regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teaching so that any weaknesses in teaching and learning are addressed quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because weaknesses in the quality of teaching have not been fully tackled and as a result there is inconsistency in pupils' achievement. Leaders have not ensured that teaching is enabling different groups of pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- The roles and responsibilities of middle leaders are not well developed, due to more than half of the teachers being newly qualified and unable to take on leadership roles. This limits the school's capacity to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Despite pupils' below-average standards, leaders have not taken swift enough action to secure better outcomes for pupils. Monitoring does not identify fully the weaknesses in teaching and help teachers to improve quickly particular aspects of their practice that are weak.
- Middle leaders have limited capacity to focus on their subjects. They have provided staff with some training and have undertaken some monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress across the school. However, there is considerable scope for middle leaders to hold teachers to account more rigorously for outcomes of pupils.
- The headteacher has managed changes in staffing well this year, including several new teachers. The headteacher is fully aware of the impact this has had on progress for these pupils. She has now secured a more stable and effective staff team.
- Staff promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and this is reflected in the general good conduct of pupils. The leaders' promotion of British values such as tolerance, kindness and respect is a strength of the school. Individual pupils are known well by staff, and leaders ensure that pupils' pastoral needs are well supported.
- The school's curriculum covers all the requirements of the national curriculum. Leaders have made sure that it is engaging and exciting for the pupils. There is a range of trips that interest pupils. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about the trip to 'Kent Life' that made their history studies more real for them. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about different faiths, lifestyles and cultures in detail and as a result they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders plan effective sessions that ensure that pupils are taught to be tolerant and accepting of people's differences. In a discussion with the lead inspector, pupils spoke maturely and sincerely about the importance of being kind to other people. They are knowledgeable about the many different groups in modern society.
- The school uses the physical education (PE) and sports premium appropriately. PE is a popular subject with the pupils. Teachers' skills have been improved in the teaching of specific subjects such as rugby, and pupils play a wider range of sports.
- The headteacher has implemented effectively a new approach to assessing pupils' work without levels, which teachers are using with increasing confidence. More needs to be done to ensure that teachers are assessing work accurately using the new criteria so that work is challenging.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. This is additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders track the progress of these pupils carefully. School assessment information shows that the achievement gaps between many of these pupils and their peers are narrowing.
- The headteacher uses performance management effectively. She sets challenging targets for teachers and makes regular visits to classrooms and checks pupils' books and pupils' progress throughout the year. There is now appropriate training for teachers to improve their skills and this is developing an ambitious culture in the school.
- The special educational needs leader from the academy trust has identified correctly priorities for improving the provision of special needs across the school. This includes revising how pupils are identified, how well they are progressing, and the difference that intervention strategies make to raising standards.
- Support from the academy trust has been effective in securing the senior leadership of the school, enabling the local Accountability and Standards Committee to take increasing responsibility for the strategic direction of the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development effectively. Pupils demonstrate through their behaviour around school and when working with each other, for example when acting as 'reading buddies', that they follow the direction of the school's core values.

- There are some good links between the school and parents. Parents volunteer regularly in school and are generally supportive of the school's work. However, some parents expressed concerns about the quality of some aspects of the school, including the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know where the strongest teaching is in the school. Governors contribute to the management of staff performance, ensuring that only those members of staff who met their targets received a pay rise. However, they have not done enough to help secure good teaching across key stage 2.
 - The local board is both increasingly strategic and influential on the progress made by the school. Members of the board are knowledgeable and skilled, so that they are able to ask pertinent questions of senior leaders.
 - Governors know how sport premium funding and pupil premium funding have been spent and the impact that this is having on pupils' attainment and progress in academic and physical development.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has a good understanding of child protection procedures, and arrangements are appropriate and thorough. All staff have recently been provided with training to update their safeguarding knowledge. Safeguarding processes are robust because they are consistently applied and make sure pupils feel safe. There is a safe culture in the school and an openness in communication between the school and other partners and agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it does not support and extend the learning and progress of different groups of pupils well enough.
- The implementation of the school's marking policy is having a limited impact. Not all staff are effective in the identification and correction of misconceptions in pupils' work, which leads to inconsistency. In their work pupils are not clear about important aspects of the learning, which is not picked up by staff. Consequently opportunities to identify how the quality of their work could be improved are missed.
- Tasks are not always matched well to the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly in mathematics and writing. Work can be too challenging for some pupils or too easy for others. This hinders progress, especially for the most able pupils, who do not move forwards quickly enough in their learning.
- Good questioning skills by some teaching assistants moved the pupils' learning forward. However, on other occasions teaching assistants spent too much time supporting pupils' personal organisation rather than learning. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make consistently good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making the progress expected of them. Information provided by the school and work in pupils' books supports this. As a result, the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing, particularly in Year 6.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in Years 5 and 6 is a strength of the school. The impact of this is clearly evident in the quality of the work in current pupils' exercise books. Teachers know their pupils very well and they use accurate assessment to plan tasks that both interest and challenge pupils.
- Teachers in year groups where teaching is effective have high expectations of what all their pupils can achieve. They assess accurately the learning and progress that pupils make, and use this information very well to plan challenging and engaging lessons. There are occasions when pupils with special educational needs or disability receive high-quality support that uses a range of different resources to meet pupils' needs very well.
- Reading and phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) are taught well, with imaginative use of resources to support pupils who struggle with reading. Staff reinforce the use of phonics in different lessons. Staff teach using the same agreed approach with pupils, which ensures their consistent understanding of how to read unfamiliar words.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are polite and friendly. They speak courteously to visitors and show pride in their school. Increasingly, pupils show pride in the work they produce.
- Pupils are polite and respectful. They are purposeful and quietly confident in their manner. Those with whom the inspector spoke expressed positive views about the school, including the wide range of trips, which they greatly enjoy.
- Pupils are confident; they know how to keep themselves safe, including from bullying. They believe the school helps them to learn about eating healthily and how to keep fit through regular exercise and playing sport. They use the computers safely and express clearly how the school has helped them understand how to keep safe when using the internet.
- The school's efforts to develop pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally are effective. For example, pupils take particular pride in acting as class representatives and taking on roles, such as equipment monitors, that ensure the day-to-day smooth running of the school.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of faiths, views and cultures that are different to their own and that everyone is entitled to their own opinion. They know what racism is and why it is not tolerated. Pupils also demonstrate this mature and thoughtful attitude when conveying well-balanced views on a range of ethical issues, including climate change.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils usually enjoy school and talked positively about the numerous subjects they enjoy. One older pupil, typical of many, said: 'I like school because we always get to learn new things.'
- On a few occasions, attitudes are not as good when the task does not stimulate the interest of the pupils or make them think hard.
- Pupils move calmly round the school site, and are generally polite and courteous to adults and each other.
- Pupils play well together and their behaviour out of class and around the school is generally good. Where teaching is good, pupils are very well behaved, work hard and demonstrate good self-discipline.
- Attendance rates are improving and are now broadly average. Attendance is less good for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. Persistent absence is above the national average and the school is working well to address this and is beginning to see the impact of its work through more regular attendance of particular pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because their progress does not build well enough on their typical starting points on entry to the school. Recent improvements in addressing the quality of teaching have ensured that progress in some classes has improved, particularly in upper key stage 2. However, these actions have been variable in the other classes and so have had less impact.
- Attainment is below average, especially in writing. This is because pupils do not develop their writing skills in sufficient depth by using them in a wide enough range of subjects. This means that they do not fully understand some key features such as how and when to use paragraphs. Pupils do not have enough time to write longer and more complex pieces of writing, which means that they are not challenged to sustain and develop their ideas in detail.
- In mathematics, pupils are given helpful resources to ensure that they see how strategies lead to answers. This helps pupils to enjoy mathematics, but they are not challenged effectively through problem-solving tasks. Consequently, pupils do not progress well enough.
- Currently, pupils are making better progress than was the case previously. This includes some disadvantaged pupils who sometimes make faster progress than their classmates.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Too few pupils reach the higher levels that they are capable of by the end of key stage 2. Not enough pupils attained as well as they should in writing in 2015 and a lower than average proportion reached the higher levels in reading, mathematics, and spelling and grammar.
- Across the school as a whole, pupils who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers.
- Achievement in phonics is a strength of the school, with outcomes being above the national average in 2015. Pupils routinely use this secure knowledge when reading.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The knowledge and skills of children when they join Reception are broadly typical for their age in most areas of learning. Some staff have expectations of what pupils can learn that are too low. However, activities outside and indoors do provide opportunities for children to develop their communication, reading and writing skills as part of their play. This means that most, but not all, pupils are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader has acted swiftly this year on recommendations from an external consultant from the academy trust to increase the quality of resources and learning experiences for children, especially in the outdoor area. These gains have enabled staff to design more-stimulating activities, which have improved children's progress.
- Children participate enthusiastically in a wide range of well-designed activities, both in the classrooms and in the outdoor area. Most children behave well because they are busy and interested. At times, however, a few children lose focus during lessons and are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Children get on well with each other, happily talking to their classmates and to adults about their ideas and opinions and listening with interest to others. They talk eagerly to visitors about their learning and do so politely.
- Disadvantaged pupils are usually supported well by staff. Children are provided with a good range of additional support to ensure that any gap, especially in literacy, is addressed quickly by carefully selected interventions.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector were positive about the teaching, learning and care provided. There are numerous occasions for parents to understand how their children learn in school and the teaching strategies that are used. For example, many parents attended a reading workshop where parents observed a phonics lesson to learn how staff teach early reading skills. Children also said how much they liked their time in school.
- Children feel secure and valued because adults take good care of them and make sure that they are safe. They copy the good role models provided by adults and have a keen sense of right and wrong. Staff ensure that welfare requirements are met and that the indoor and outdoor areas are safe for children to use.

School details

Unique reference number	137467
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10012319

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Petra Bensted
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Debbie Swann
Telephone number	01795 521362
Website	www.lynsted-norton.kent.sch.uk
Email address	admin@lynsted-norton.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average. The number of pupils with an education, health care plan or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there have been staff changes. This includes the headteacher who started in September 2015.
- The school is part of The Village Academy Trust. The school is managed locally by the achievement and standards committee.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in eight lessons. He also examined the quality of work in pupils' books.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, and at breaks and lunchtimes. He had discussions with pupils and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector assessed 40 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, a letter from a parent, an email from a parent and spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector evaluated the responses from eight staff questionnaires and met with the headteacher, other school leaders, four governors, and a representative from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector looked at school documents, including information about pupils' achievement, records of behaviour and attendance, records of monitoring, school self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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